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IRISH MELODIES. WITH THE MUSIC.

In course of publication, to be completed in 10 Numbers, published monthly,  
price One Shilling each,

# MOORE'S IRISH MELODIES,

WITH

SYMPHONIES AND ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR THE PIANOFORTE.

PEOPLE'S EDITION, IN SMALL QUARTO.

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"WE recognise with extreme pleasure the publication of a People's Edition of Moore's Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte. One of the best likenesses we ever saw of the Poet is on the outside of No. I; and within we have, beautifully and accurately printed, thirteen of his songs. The issue is to be completed in ten numbers, at one shilling each; and we have no hesitation in saying that if they all equal the first number, the work will form one of the most charming and popular additions to the music-box of all classes of singers and performers."

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"MOORE'S Irish Melodies are too well known to the whole world to require a word either of eulogy or criticism; and the fine edition of this truly national work recently published by Messrs. Longman and Co. has by this time gained an extensive circulation. To extend its circulation still more the publishers have commenced a People's Edition, in shilling numbers, ten of which will complete the work. The first number, which has just appeared, is a good specimen. It contains thirteen of these gems of Irish song, in the quarto form, and is printed (in type) with equal correctness and elegance."

DAILY NEWS.

**THE LANCET** writes on the 10th of May, 1870, "The People's Edition of Moore's Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte, is a most welcome addition to the musical literature of the day. The first number, at the low price of a shilling, contains some of the best music of these Melodies, and the whole is to be completed in ten numbers. The type, paper, and general execution are unexceptionable. The issue is well worthy attention."

THE LANCET.

**MESSRS. LONGMAN and Co.** have published a series of ten shilling numbers of Moore's Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte. The first number, at the low price of a shilling, contains some of the best music of these Melodies, and the whole is to be completed in ten numbers. The type, paper, and general execution are unexceptionable. The issue is well worthy attention."

"THE announcement of the People's Edition of Moore's Melodies, to be completed in ten parts at one shilling each, is the most important and most welcome musical intelligence we ever heard. There is nothing in vocal music to equal the Irish Melodies, and there are no lyrics to surpass the words. These Melodies were originally published in ten parts at fifteen shillings each; and even at that price they were cheap compared with the two-shilling modern songs. Second-hand copies of the old editions have always commanded a high price; but now we are to have ten shillings that which used to cost seven pounds ten shillings, until about a year ago, when Messrs. Longman published a new edition at thirty-one shillings and sixpence, a marvel of cheapness. We hope that the work will sell by tens of thousands, and it will if the public appreciate it as they ought to do. These Melodies will probably cause a complete revolution in the taste for vocal music; one of the good results being, no doubt, to banish many of the modern sentimental and silly songs from the market."

HEARTS GUARDIAN.

London: LONGMAN, BROWN, and CO.; and ADDISON and Co  
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65  
Charles F. Johnson  
1870



SELECT  
MEMOIRS OF PORT ROYAL.

VOL. II.

LONDON  
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.  
NEW-STREET SQUARE.



SELECT  
MEMOIRS OF PORT ROYAL.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED

TOUR TO ALET

GIFT OF AN ABBESS

VISIT TO PORT ROYAL

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

&c. &c.

TAKEN FROM ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

BY

M. A. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.

Fifth Edition.

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SELECT  
MEMOIRS OF PORT ROYAL.

VOL. II.

B



# MEMOIRS.

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## CHAPTER IX.

NUNS OF THE VISITATION. — DOCTRINE OF IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE. — PORT ROYAL DE PARIS. — LETTERS OF M. DE ST. MARTHE, TO PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS, AND TO THE AEBESS OF —.

WE return from the exiled nuns to the bereft community of Port Royal.

The abbess and nuns, who held the chief posts in the monasteries of Port Royal des Champs and Port Royal de Paris, having been seized, and temporarily imprisoned in the convents, that they might be induced, by intimidation and hard usage to give up the point in contest; the archbishop of Paris, it may be remembered, had resolved to send other nuns, of the visitation, of the convent of St. Mary, to fill up their places. This he did, partly to seduce the community of Port Royal into compliance

by persuasion, or to terrify them by authority ; and partly to act as their jailers, and prevent them from drawing up any representation against this unjust and illegal usage, or at least to prevent the possibility, even if secretly drawn up, of such a document finding its way beyond the walls of the convent. Thus were the unfortunate nuns of Port Royal, not only deprived of their own officers ; but, contrary to every rule, their archbishop attempted to compel them to submit to the government of nuns, not elected by their own community, which was necessary to their lawful establishment — of nuns whom it would have been wholly out of their power, had they been so inclined, to elect, as they were persons of a totally different religious rule. The nuns of Port Royal were bound therefore, to bear their testimony against this fundamental infringement of their constitution.

The strange nuns established themselves at first in the infirmary, where they only however spent a few days. For seeing they were there too remote to watch over the actions of the community, as narrowly as they had been enjoined, they came out into the body of the convent. The bereft captives meanwhile, spoke to their jailers with the greatest circumspection. They endeavoured, by every means, to avoid communication with them ; but when it became necessary to speak, they did so with great respect and politeness.



This was the more easy, as they knew those nuns had this odious office imposed on them, without any solicitation on their part, and probably much against their inclination. The nuns of the visitation, on the contrary, used every possible effort, to enter into conversation with those of Port Royal. This was particularly done, by those more especially charged by the archbishop with the office of converting, or rather of subverting, them; which these good, but mistaken nuns, conceived to be a very important duty; and which might much advance the glory of God; and hence they endeavoured to execute their commission with great zeal.

The day after the lawful superiors had been taken away, M. Chamillard — a creature of the archbishop's, whom he had also forced on the nuns as their ecclesiastical superior in defiance of their constitution — assembled the bereft community, and commanded them on the part of the archbishop, to place all the keys of the monastery in the hands of the nuns of St. Mary. To this the community replied, "that it would be out of their power to comply, because the nuns entrusted with the keys by their lawful superiors, had no power to deliver them up, but into *their* hands; nor could they under any circumstances, receive as superiors, nuns not even belonging to their own order." M. Chamillard seemed much chagrined, and told them they had better submit, seeing they must

do so in the end. In the afternoon, the Mère Eugénie, the superior of the nuns of the visitation, assembled the nuns of Port Royal, under pretext of paying her respects to the community, but with the real intention of executing the designs intimated by M. Chamillard. After embracing some of the nuns, she stated to the Sœur Françoise Claire, who filled the post of tourrière, that she had orders from the archbishop to place at the turn, in her stead, two nuns she had brought with her ; one to attend the turn, and the other to transact all its business with those without, and that therefore, she had nothing to do but to deliver up the keys of the inclosure and of the parlours. This the Sœur Françoise refused. In vain did the Mère Eugénie urge, “ that as their own officers were now taken away, they ought to receive whomsoever the archbishop appointed.” The Sœur Françoise replied, “ that in the absence of their lawful superior, they might willingly receive any persons she might choose out of their own number, and even this would be an infringement of their rights, as their officers were elective, but they had no power to receive any others.” When the Sœur went to resume her duties at the turn, she found the strange nuns already established there by the Mère Eugénie ; she did not however yield up to them the keys, which the Port Royal nuns retained till the 24th of September ; but subject to the inspection of

the two nuns of the visitation, who closely watched at the turn, everything that went in or out of the monastery, and who were ready, through M. Chamillard, to give immediate notice of anything that might occur to the police. The nuns of the visitation were also placed as sentinels in the cloisters and dormitories to prevent, if possible, the Port Royal nuns from holding any private communications with their own sisters. Thus were they reduced, in the space of half a day, to a state of captivity in their own house. In the mean time, the Mère Eugénie, and her assistants, the Mère Seraphine, and Marguerite of St. Elizabeth, treated the Port Royal nuns with the greatest haughtiness and insolence. One of their priests, M. Bail, observed, "that he thought the Port Royal nuns had been treated with far too much lenity. That in Italy or Spain they would have been dressed as devils and burnt alive." Two indeed of the nuns of St. Mary, were very different from the others, — the Mères Meaupeau and Sourdiere. They were persons of contracted minds, yet of amiable dispositions, and showed their captives every kindness in their power.

The Mère de Meaupeau especially, was an eminently devoted nun, and her conduct was truly edifying. She was much attached to the nuns of Port Royal; nevertheless, she seemed to consider that they were greatly mistaken, in not blindly

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obeying their superior. This nun was aunt to the celebrated Minister Fouquet. During his prosperity she often prayed that something might happen to humble him for his good; and he was indeed humbled, though his disgrace was accompanied with circumstances she could not have wished for. The nuns of Port Royal derived abundant subject of admiration and edification, from the way in which she conducted herself throughout the whole of this unhappy business, and more especially during that of his trial. It seemed quite doubtful, whether even his life might be spared. Yet in the midst of this heavy affliction and disgrace, at the advanced age of seventy, her peace remained uninterrupted, and her chief desire was, that all might be done to the glory of GOD. Perhaps the sorrows of her own family made this good mother feel more sympathy for the Port Royal nuns. There is no doubt, however, but that it was truly odious to her to be charged, even in name, with such an occupation. She earnestly sought her dismissal, saying that though she could not join in sentiment with the Port Royal nuns, she could take no part in augmenting their sufferings. Her dismissal was granted; and when she went to embrace the nuns, she said to one of them, "Well my Sister, I only pray GOD that he may give me the grace to find in heaven a place at your feet." And indeed, as truth requires that justice should be

done to every person, we must add that all the nuns of St. Mary, had they not been placed in such an odious capacity, were well capable of edifying their prisoners in many things. Their love for their vocation, their love for evangelical poverty, their charity to the sick, was truly admirable: though, combined with their views, even these virtues proved some of the most cruel means of tormenting their fellow-prisoners. For no sooner was any nun taken ill, and more especially if she was in extremity, than these good, but injudicious nuns, took their station at her bed side, and began interminable discussions on their revolts, rebellion against the Pope, heresy against the church, and disobedience to the archbishop. Sometimes with tears, and at other times with threats, assuring her that she would die, without sacraments, and be everlastingly damned as to her soul; and that her body would be thrown on a dunghill and deprived of Christian burial. Such were the tender mercies of these nuns to their prisoners. In short, as there are some bodily diseases which preclude persons from the use of their senses; so the notion of obedience, which possessed these daughters of St. Mary, was a moral paralysis, which produced the very same ill effects on them mentally. This notion seemed not only to degrade the powers of their souls, hearts, and minds, but actually to suspend the functions of conscience, to

of implicit obedience, she (the Sœur Flavie) added, "That for her part, she was in the disposition of obeying, without any distinction or discernment at all; and without ever making any reflection, whether the commandment of her ecclesiastical superior were good or bad, because she ought not to presuppose, that he would give her any order, which was not conformable with what GOD required." Upon which I proposed to her the following question, "My sister, if after the death of his grace the present archbishop, another arose in his place, who commanded you to condemn him, or to sign a formulary, declaring the whole of his present conduct to have been unjust and arbitrary, that he was a violent and time-serving man, one who abused his ecclesiastical prerogative, in requiring the signature of a formulary, which is no article of Christian faith, and that moreover, you yourself had committed a still greater crime, in upholding him by your signature, Would you sign such a declaration?" She answered, "Yes, my sister, I would sign it with all my heart, because I am resolved always to obey my superiors, and it is not my business to discern what they command; it is their concern to inquire if what they do, and command to be done, be right or wrong; but my only part is to yield them implicit and prompt obedience, nor can I sin in obeying them." "But, my sister," rejoined I, "supposing

there arose five or six archbishops of Paris, one after the other, each of whom in his turn, commanded you to undo and condemn the act his predecessor had ordered you to perform and to approve, what would you then do?" she replied, "My sister, if fifty archbishops of Paris succeeded each other, I should always obey the command of the one in office." I answered, "But, my sister, what then is your foundation? It cannot be GOD, for you serve other Lords before Him; nor can you be led by the Spirit of GOD, for GOD has no variableness nor shadow of turning; whilst, on the contrary, you are ready to change with every wind of doctrine; a sure test of those who rest on frail man, instead of our immutable LORD; and who follow false teachers instead of the Spirit of truth, the appointed teacher of His church." She answered, "I hold to perfect obedience, and that is all." With these words she went away, whilst I was saying in reply, "Would it not be well, my sister, not merely to hold perfect obedience, but to see, that this perfect obedience be yielded to GOD, and not to man?"

Such were the professed opinions of the Sœur Flavie; and as it appears, by the numerous relations of Port Royal, such were those of the ecclesiastical party whose tool she had so wickedly stooped to become.

The difference of sentiment between the creatures

of the court party, under the dominion of the Jesuits, and the Port Royalists, on these subjects, will plainly appear by the following letter, from the venerable M. de St. Marthe, one of their confessors.— *Lettres Edifiantes*, tom. i. p. 15.

“ January, 1664.

“ My Sisters,

“ Do not fear all the threats which may be made concerning briefs and bulls, or all the mandates you may receive, whether by the authority of the pope, or that of his grace the archbishop. St. Paul says, ‘ The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.’ 1 Tim. If then, you have every reason to believe this commandment to be contrary to charity, and if you recognise that it does not lead to purity of heart, and that it does not accord with a good conscience, and that it does not spring from a faith unfeigned—how should you imagine that you ought to conform to it? A lively faith is inseparable from purity of heart, and from a good conscience, as the apostle says. Never forget that you will soon weaken yourselves in the faith, if you neglect purity of heart, and if you sacrifice a good conscience. The same apostle teaches us, a little after, when instructing his disciple Timothy, he commands him to preserve faith and a good con-



science, adding the awful caution, that Those who have neglected to do so, or who have put away this good conscience, have soon, concerning faith, made shipwreck: giving as instances Hymeneus and Alexander, who were excommunicated, and delivered over to the power of Satan. Hence my dear sisters, very far from fearing excommunication, so long as you remain faithful to the dictates of conscience, you ought, on the contrary, to fear lest GOD should abandon you, if you should be unfaithful; and lest He should punish you, by allowing you to fall into errors against the faith: And so far from being able to excommunicate you, whilst you maintain this exact fidelity, remember that on the contrary, St. Paul would have excommunicated you, if you had acted contrary to a good conscience, although commanded by men so to do; and one may say, that in the sight of GOD, you would by so doing, have excommunicated yourselves. Whereas, if you remain in an humble firmness, in the state in which He has placed you, you can neither fear excommunication nor any other evil; because, as we have seen, true faith is inseparable from purity of heart, and the answer of a good conscience, and that from the love of GOD. Now it is written, ‘ That all things shall work together for good, to those who love GOD; ’ that is to say, to those who preserve themselves in this purity of heart and love; and all that can be

done to those who really abide in these divine virtues, cannot injure them, but on the contrary, we are assured, by revelation, that all must work together for their good.

“Moreover, my dear sisters, let us console ourselves in the Lord, and in a sure trust that He will not abandon us. The persecution you suffer places you in the rank of the early Christians; and be willing, and think yourselves honoured, in being called to partake of the same sort of sufferings they endured. For, believe me, it was a deep suffering to have the sorrow of seeing their brethren fall; you must expect similar trials, but let us seek to imitate them in their firm and humble faith. If these things humble us, in making us enter into a feeling sense of our own nothingness, surely they likewise fortify us, since there is no other strength than that which is founded on that deep self-abasement and humility, which may lead us to dig deep, and build upon the Rock of Ages Himself.

“Always propose to yourselves the examples of the primitive Christians. They had to bear the reproach which false brethren brought upon them, and the cause of God. They were tried by many who denied the faith after having embraced it, and who abandoned the truth after having known it. This it was, which occasioned the apostle to exclaim, ‘O foolish Galatians,’ &c. You must extend your charity to

those who fall, since Jesus Christ commands us to imitate GOD His Father, who makes His sun to shine on the good and on the evil; and in the numerous little vexations they may occasion you, you must exhibit to them your patience, which is the fulfilment of charity, according to the word of the apostle, ‘In patience possess ye your souls.’

“GOD is just in all His judgments, and what we suffer both *is*, and when seen truly *seems* to us, far less than we deserve. We ought to esteem ourselves too happy, that, though in the midst of the furnace, He sustains us; whereas, those truly to be pitied, are the unhappy persons, who, delivered over to the blindness of the natural understanding, and impenitence of the natural heart, persecute the church of GOD. And if He permits some of your sisters to fall, while you stand, let none glorify herself on that account; but seeing her own danger, in the lapse of those who once walked with her, as fellow-pilgrims, let her cleave more closely to the Lord, and if she thinketh she standeth, let her take heed lest she also fall.

“Hence, my dear sisters, we pray continually for you, that GOD may render you worthy of your high vocation: that He may make you more and more able to perform the duties of a religious calling, and to conform to it, not only with respect to fidelity to its rule, but, also, as to faithfulness and cheerfulness

under the sufferings and persecutions by which He has permitted you to be tried. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for in this consists your glory. And we also ask for you, with the same apostle, that He should accomplish His good work in you, and finish the work of your faith in Him: that Jesus Christ may be glorified by you, and you in Him; for that is all to which we must pretend.

“If we have anything more to wish for you, it is to beseech you, as that great apostle did with regard to his disciples, ‘*Ut non cito moveamini a vestro sensu; neque terreamini, neque per spiritum, neque per sermonem, neque per epistolam.*’ Do not be terrified—do not be troubled. And with the knowledge and light it has pleased GOD to afford you, whether briefs are handed you, or bulls fulminated against you; whether discourses are held to terrify you, or casuistic subtleties to ensnare you; no—not even if those who would mislead you, boast that they are led by the Spirit of God, do not be astonished, for the apostle predicted all these things would happen. But then, he adds at the same time, that they should succeed only against those who should perish; and who had not received the love of the truth in their hearts. By which he marks, that there can be no salvation independently of a love of the truth, which is the bond of all true faith and living charity.

“Thank GOD, that He has vouchsafed to choose you

as the first victims of this persecution against His truth; thank Him, that He has bestowed on you that knowledge of the truth, now so rare, which may render you a blessing to His church; and that He has crowned it with those persecutions which may issue in your own sanctification, and in the glorification of your Redeemer. This grace is so great, that we cannot be sufficiently thankful for it; and we are wholly unworthy of such a favour, if we do not appreciate His having called us to a participation of His sufferings. Let us then abide firmly, by a thankful humility, in the state to which He has called us. And now, may the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace, even that peace in believing, which passeth all understanding; and which as the world cannot give, so neither can it take away."

A few days after the intrusion of the Mère Eugénie, she demanded the constitutions of the order, that she might read them, and assume the reins of government, without being obliged at every moment to ask for assistance from those she was to govern, and accordingly, supposing that the twelve who were taken away, comprehended all the persons of talent in the community, and that she should find no difficulty in subjugating or intimidating the rest, she began to issue her orders in the most authoritative manner.

But she soon found herself mistaken. It was calmly and respectfully observed to her, that so long as she stayed, they wished to show her every respect, which could be paid to the most distinguished visitor; but that their officers being in existence, though absent, they could not elect others, and still less form a precedent so contrary to their rules, as obeying one not of their community. The nuns then, without acquainting the M. Eugénie, proceeded to elect temporary substitutes for their officers, amongst themselves, and obeyed them in all things, as though their own abbess had been at home. Every day the M. Eugénie undertook some new encroachments, particularly that of holding the assembly and the chapter. This the nuns resisted for a considerable time; but hearing it was intended to imprison many more of their number, it was thought more expedient, to remain together in their monastery, than to cause the loss of more of their number, by resisting what was, after all, a mere form, by which they did not feel bound. The nuns being then all assembled to hold their first chapter; the nuns of St. Mary entered, and the Mère Eugénie declared she alone should hold it, notwithstanding all their representations of the illegality of their proceedings. The Sœur Françoise Agathe, sub-prioress of Port Royal, and consequently their head—now the others were taken away—then rose and said aloud, “ My sisters, the



Mère Eugénie is about to hold the chapter, but without prejudice to our appeal and acts of protestation against it." About the same time, the M. Eugénie took in the choir the place of the Mère Prioress, as she had done in the refectory : and she even attempted to assume that of the abbess, till the Sœur Genéviève de l'Incarnation told her, that she could not, under any pretext, assume the rank of a titled abbess. From that day, the nuns of St. Mary attended all the offices. They always, however, manifested the greatest inquietude, when any of their prisoners, especially those who wrote with elegance, were absent, because they had been especially ordered to use the utmost precaution and vigilance that their prisoners should not be enabled to communicate together, to draw up any protestation, or appeal to the law ; or that, if drawn up, it should never find its way out of the walls of the house. Nevertheless, all their vigilance, united with the perfidy of the Sœur Flavie Passart, did not prevent the nuns from communicating with those without, and receiving necessary advices from time to time ; which enabled them to unveil, in *procès verbaux*, the crying injustices, of which they were the subject, which their persecutors wished, by every means, to conceal from the public.

Whilst the M. Eugénie endeavoured, by a union of force, stratagem, and never-wearying and re-



newed contentions, to render herself mistress of the house, and to establish her pretended superiority, the Sœur Flavie, like an evil genius, unobserved and unsuspected, glided amongst her sisters, insinuating herself into their counsels — all of which she betrayed — under the guise of being herself one of the most determined on their side. To the community, she always appeared as a saint, ready to bear testimony to the truth before the archbishop; whilst she was in reality plotting with him, how to betray them.

Thus were the saints of Port Royal, like the apostles of old, in perils of false brethren; and this trial was more deeply felt, than all their others. Their sweetest consolation, till the time their mothers were taken away, was the perfect peace and union that reigned amongst themselves. The demon of discord had now entered. And He who had permitted that there should be found a Judas amidst the apostles, permitted that there should also be found a traitor in the house of Port Royal; that His handmaids should be favoured to drink of the same cup with their Lord; and show this trait of conformity with their Divine Master. It is time to unveil this new mystery of iniquity.

The imprisonment of the abbesses, had opened, all at once, a new perspective of ambition. The nuns of St. Mary could only be at Port Royal for a season. Being of a different order, they could never remain

its legitimate superiors. The Sœur Flavie imagined that if she stirred up the nuns, with all her power, to make remonstrances, *procès verbaux*, &c.; she might easily succeed in establishing the resolution of the archbishop, to give Port Royal a new superior, and keep the old ones imprisoned for life; and if she herself became subservient to him, and was useful in revealing their plans, and exhibited her talent, of which she had a large share, who so likely to gain that envied office as herself? Nay, the archbishop would be compelled to yield it to her, as the only nun of the order, and of the same community, he could permanently substitute for the exiled abbess. Her part was then to enter into the views of the archbishop secretly; and to make her talents appear to the best advantage, by endeavouring to gain over some proselytes to the same views, from amongst her weaker sisters; whilst at the same time, under the mask of the most profound dissimulation, she entered into all their counsels, in order to betray them; and to urge, under the appearance of zeal, all those nuns who were distinguished for talent, and who might be her rivals, to such steps as might seal their disfavour with the archbishop. Accordingly, she expressed to the community her great sorrow, that they had not used more forcible expressions against the formulary; and taxed them with expressing too much respect to their ecclesiastical superiors. She then urged them

to more zeal, and to set them at defiance. She assisted them in secretly drawing up a very decided *procès verbal*, and several other pieces; but on the day of signature, she was very opportunely, as usual, taken ill, and prevented from signing it herself. When the pieces were once sent forth, she as suddenly recovered, and bitterly bewailed having been prevented from adding her signature.

The nuns were however not long without receiving advice that they were undoubtedly betrayed by some one of their own number. Accustomed however to judge favourably, and being indeed themselves only suffering because they would not pass a rash judgment, they could not persuade themselves that the intelligence was true. So that a friend of theirs, M. Doamloup, having called and asked the Sœur Genéviève de l'Incarnation, who being their elder took the place of abbess, in what state the nuns were, she answered "that they were all firm." But M. Doamloup spoke to her in a manner which convinced her that he was persuaded otherwise: on which the Sœur Genéviève again said, "How, sir, can you doubt it? It seems to me that there are none of our sisters, who would not prefer dying to offending GOD." About the same time, the Sœur Euphrosine said also with deep grief to the Sœur Genéviève, "My sisters, I have seen his grace the archbishop, but I am sure that there must necessarily be one traitor amongst us, who reports

to him everything, because he knew exactly, all that passed in the interior of this monastery, in the time of our Mothers. It is truly deplorable, but I assure you, that nothing has here been resolved on, or transacted, amongst ourselves, in the most profound secrecy, of which he and M. Chamillard are not immediately informed; and that too in councils at which the nuns alone have been present." These circumstances, combined with various others, at length convinced the Sœur Genéviève, that a party was by degrees forming, and a division gradually taking place amongst themselves; and that disunion was spreading in the very heart of the community. Several sisters entered into her views, and circumstances daily occurred, which appeared to place their conjectures beyond all possibility of doubt. But who could be the guilty individual, they could not even conjecture. Their state of suspense was almost insupportable. The total ignorance and uncertainty, as to those who might or might not be implicated; and its necessary consequence of infusing the greatest distrust of one another, rendered their situation most afflicting. Each of the poor nuns was obliged to concentrate her grief in her own bosom, lest she might be addressing herself to some concealed enemy.

When it was necessary to deliberate upon the affairs of the community, they were constrained to speak before those who listened only to betray them.

Thus they could neither consult about their affairs in public nor in private, without an inevitable danger of being betrayed. If their resolution was worded in a manner too soft and respectful, it only afforded their enemies hold upon them. If, on the contrary, it was too rigorous, they were treated with still greater harshness. If they did not consult together at all, they were exposed to the evils of not acting in concert; if they took mutual counsel, they were sure to be betrayed. Thus they were continually perplexed with conflicting difficulties. Occasions, however, did occur in which they were compelled to exhibit their genuine sentiments, and to show the respect which they owed to their legitimate, but exiled, superiors; and to mark by their conduct, that they could neither recognise the M. Eugénie as their superior, nor M. Chamillard as their director. This firmness exasperated their jailers to the greatest degree; and they began to publish on all sides the foulest calumnies, not only against their doctrines, but even against their characters—M. Chamillard most falsely insinuating on all sides, that they were abandoned to the greatest disorders, and had cast off even the form of religion.

Meanwhile, the Sœur Genéviève determined to use every means to discover by whom they were betrayed. She therefore divided the whole community into three bands, placing over each a nun,

whom she could thoroughly trust. These bands were to read and consult together, at different times and places, and on different subjects, and the three heads were afterwards to confer together. The reading consisted of pieces sent by their friends for their consolation and edification.\* The Sœur Genéviève justly thought, that by observing which of the bands had its proceedings divulged, they should in process of time find out the traitor; resolving, in case her plan succeeded, to subdivide that band again, and so on, till they discovered the individual.

Accordingly, one day when about twelve nuns were assembled, reading a letter of M. de St. Marthe, the Sœur Flavie gave notice of it to the M. Eugénie, who gave them a severe reprimand. Whilst all this trouble distracted them within, M. Chamillard assailed them without, by establishing conferences and sermons, the whole of which consisted of homilies on the duty of passive obedience, and the danger and sin of disobedience. His discourses were most frequently one tissue of invective against themselves, interlarded with the most injurious epithets, and calumnious tales of their imprisoned friends and superiors; comparing them to every rebel, heretic, and schismatic, who had ever troubled either church or state, from the time of Cerinthus, to that of

\* One of these we will insert at the termination of this chapter, by way of specimen.



Madame Guion. He closed his first harangue in these terms: "You think to be martyrs? so you shall be, but to the devil; and instead of a crown of glory, your portion shall be the flames of hell!"

At the third of these conferences, many of the nuns, not thinking it right to countenance such a profanation of the pulpit, which ought to be the oracle of truth, nor yet choosing to hear such atrocious calumnies against their imprisoned Mères and Sœurs, rose and departed. The fanatical preacher became so incensed, that he broke off his discourse, and quitting his place, rushed to the grate which separated him from the nuns' choir, and transported with fury, shook and struck it with all his force, exclaiming with a voice of thunder, "Those who go out shall never be received to communion more; they shall die without sacraments, and be thrown as carrion on a dunghill. There are canons excommunicating all who go out whilst the word of GOD is preached." On this the Sœur Flavie, trying to detain the Sœur Angélique of St. Alexis of Charmont Hecaucourt, hypocritically said, "Alas, my dear sister, had you not better stay? what if you should be unhappily excommunicated?" The Sœur Alexis answered aloud and firmly, "The canons of the church do excommunicate those who go out when the word of GOD is preached. But this is not the word of GOD. Let the word of GOD be preached, and we will listen."



After the conference, M. de Chamillard sent for the Sœur St. Eustoquie de Flescelles Brégy, and abruptly addressed her thus: "You too, I suppose, were one who went out?" She replied, "Indeed, sir, you do me injustice; I did not." On which he began praising her, and wishing the others to follow her example; to which she replied, "Indeed I wish so too; for then not one would have been present, in the first instance." From that day, most of the nuns withdrew from his conferences and his confessional, both of which became deserted; and M. Chamillard found himself a priest without a flock. His complaints, added to those of the Mère Eugénie, and to the reports of the Sœur Flavie—who assured them that the nuns would rather die than yield—determined M. Péréfixe to exert himself to devise some new and more effectual measures.

The persecuted nuns, meanwhile, had demanded, and, on the 10th of September, they obtained letters of chancery, by which it was permitted them to cite the archbishop of Paris, and all who were concerned, to answer before the parliament of Paris, for the part they had taken in the illegal measures that had been perpetrated, and for the violence which had been offered to the nuns. These letters were signified to the archbishop, M. Chamillard, and the intruding nuns, on the 15th of the same month, with the assignation to parliament. The bereft community of Port

Royal now imagined themselves on the point of obtaining justice. But it was easy for one, who had so strong an interest as the archbishop, in not having his violence and illegal proceedings condemned, to prevent the nuns from obtaining justice; and accordingly he obtained a decree of the privy council, by which the king interdicted all interference in this affair by parliament, and transferred it to the hands of his own council; and as M. Péréfixe had taken the part he had, simply in compliance with the views of the king, it was easy to foresee the termination of any proceedings, before the royal council.

About this time, the duplicity of the Sœur Flavie became apparent. Some years before, and in the midst of their persecutions, she had had a long conversation with Mlle. Perrier, M. Pascal's niece, who had been one of her scholars—(the same who was the subject of the miraculous cure,) respecting the signature of the formulary. The Sœur Flavie expressed great fear lest the nuns should yield, and had besought her to ask from M. Pascal, her uncle, instructions for herself, that she might both sustain herself, and fortify her sisters; and she earnestly besought her again and again to obtain a writing to that effect. The demoiselle Perrier asked M. Pascal, who complied with reluctance, and on the express condition that no copy should be taken; that the Sœur Flavie should communicate it to no one; and that she should

restore it in six weeks. She did indeed restore it, but not until after she had shown it to M. Chamillard, the emissary of the archbishop of Paris, who took a copy. This happened in 1662. Three years after—that is in 1665—a work appeared by Père Annat, a Jesuit, containing long extracts from the MSS. of Pascal. The demoiselle Perrier went to the Sœur Flavie, and reproached her with her treachery, which she could not deny. They also taxed her with having betrayed the house, by revealing its councils, and adding much of her own, and thus obtaining from the archbishop, the exile of the sixteen principal nuns, to the end that she might be chosen abbess herself. To this reproach they added another, respecting Mlle. de Roannés, whose banishment she had occasioned by her calumnies. That lady having received a *lettre de cachet*, exiling her to Poitou, and on the Duke of Roannés, her father, inquiring the reason, he found that she had been accused of resisting the formulary, and that the Sœur Flavie had been the means of her disgrace. It has been already mentioned that the nuns, instead of holding one full chapter, determined to divide the council into three divisions, and to treat of different matters at each. They soon observed, that the division whose councils were revealed, was always the one in which was the Sœur Flavie. Whilst, however, they were yet in some doubt, as to which of the nuns

in this division was the traitor, the Sœur Flavie's guilt was one day clearly discovered. The archbishop on the day referred to brought copies of some of their archives; and as she was at that time procuratrix, and had the sole care of the papers, no other person but herself could have shown them to the archbishop. This was the signal for the most cruel persecution.

The Sœur Flavie now completely threw off the mask; she watched them from every corner; established the strange nuns as spies over them; inimical persons, nay, even persons of infamous character, were posted at all the turns, so that they could hold no communication from without, but through their enemies. Jesuits were sent to them as ecclesiastics, to denounce damnation and threats of excommunication; their gardens were given up to a party of soldiers, established there in defiance of all decorum as a guard; so that the nuns could not walk out, but were wholly confined to the house. Meanwhile the heat of the summer was intense; a contagious fever broke out in the monastery; death succeeded death; the sacraments were refused to the dying, and even in the agonies of death, they were terrified with threats of excommunication; the unrelenting Sœur Flavie, the twelve strange nuns, and the ecclesiastics, going from room to room, to terrify and entangle the consciences of their victims, and to

insult them in their last hours. At length, six out of the hundred nuns, yielded to the artifices and persecutions used, and signed the formulary; amongst whom were two nuns who had for four years been in an imbecile state; one other on the point of being expelled for bad conduct; and a fourth—afterwards the celebrated Sœur Dorothée Perdreau—a person of pious feeling, but of very limited understanding. She was of low origin, and of very moderate fortune, and was received by the Mère Angélique gratuitously; who nobly gave the whole of her portion on the day of her profession to the Sœur Dorothée's brother; sending him her contract torn to pieces. This nun, after being much entangled in conscience, yielded; and from that hour, became the passive tool of the Sœur Flavie, who, finding after many months, that the imprisoned nuns did not yield, nor the community submit, and being now unmasked, began to fear what might be her situation should the abbesses return. In order then, both to accomplish her ambitious project of seeing herself the head of a community, and also to screen herself against the consequences of the return of the nuns who had been exiled, she suggested to the archbishop the idea of separating Port Royal des Champs from Port Royal de Paris, and of placing the six nuns, who with herself had signed the formulary, in Port Royal de Paris, constituting it a separate community,

who should elect an abbess from amongst themselves ; not doubting, but in that case, the choice would fall upon herself. Thus unjustly did she excite the archbishop to wrest from these nuns, what the bounty of the family of Arnauld had bestowed on the community ; and thus did she propose to take for seven nuns, one third of the provision destined for above one hundred and thirty. No sooner was this design formed, than the Sœur Flavie resolved vigorously to push it forward. In her character of procuratrix of Port Royal des Champs, she had the care of all the stores ; she therefore rising even by two in the morning surreptitiously sent out, day by day, carts loaded with stores of every description, to the monastery of which she hoped soon to see herself at the head. Furniture, house-linen, provisions, clothing, stores for all the obediences, followed in rapid succession. The nuns of Port Royal des Champs, were in great astonishment at seeing their house thus dismantled, and wondering to what it would tend, when a mandate of the archbishop, in defiance of all law, declared the nuns of Port Royal des Champs, deprived of their votes ; and called on the seven nuns of Port Royal de Paris to proceed to an election. Meanwhile the Sœur Dorothée—vastly inferior in capacity to the Sœur Flavie—gradually became wearied of being the tool of her ambitious sister ; and even the other nuns whom the



Sœur Flavie had overawed to her purposes, dreaded her intriguing, overbearing, and meddling spirit; and the archbishop himself, who had so often had recourse to her services had seen sufficient of her character, to think it would be little conducive to peace, to place any more power in her hands. So that as the time of this unjust election drew nigh, the Sœur Flavie was astonished to find her tool the Sœur Dorothee—whose mediocrity she had so long despised—named as her rival, and instead of being any longer subservient, using every means to thwart her, and to secure for herself the prize on which she had so long set her heart, and to obtain which, she had committed so many crimes, and acted so treacherous a part. The election took place and to her great mortification the Sœur Dorothee Perdreau was unanimously chosen.

Thus did the phantom elude her grasp, for which she had for years practised a course of calumny and double dealing; for which she had deprived of the necessaries of life, some of the most excellent of the earth—those to whom she owed her very bread, and yet she had not scrupled to wrest from them their possessions, and to cause them an imprisonment, the severity of which had occasioned a pestilential disease, in which many had died—persecuted, we may say, even unto death, and deprived in their last moments of the sacraments of their church. The reward of all this treachery, ingratitude, and crime



was to find herself fixed under the absolute domination of her own tool ; a person she cordially despised, and by whom she was hated for her former tyranny — a person equally weak and obstinate ; and who, like many others of that description, had no greater pleasure than in wreaking her vengeance upon her rival, by every species of petty mortification. Instead of finding a friend in the archbishop, he informed her in the coolest manner, “ That he had never entertained the least thought of making her abbess ; for which her intriguing character entirely disqualified her.” Thus did she find herself, completely overreached, and all the pains she had taken, in surreptitiously abstracting furniture and moveables from the monastery of Port Royal des Champs, only served to aggrandise her bitterest personal enemy. When she reproached the archbishop and the ecclesiastics, telling them it was by her unwearied industry and cleverness alone, they had gained their point, they coolly replied, “ Many may profit by treachery, but all abhor the traitor.” Such was the only comfort this poor sister obtained from her supposed friends.

Meantime the Sœur Dorothée was as much elated, as the Sœur Flavie was cast down. She usurped the place of abbess with a high hand, and with all the assumed importance which weak minds attach to honours. On the very day of her election, she

admitted six new postulants, collected with great pains by the archbishop; but the next day, when their instruction was to commence, she found herself strangely at a loss, knowing nothing either of Latin, or of the principles of music. She was obliged, with much shame, to call in a vicar of Notre Dame, to instruct them; and it was with the greatest difficulty, on the festival held on her inauguration, which took place a few weeks after her election, that a motet was most wretchedly performed, to the derision of all the élite of Paris, whom the archbishop had unadvisedly invited to grace the ceremony.

The Sœur Dorothée finding herself rather at a loss in the duties of an abbess, thought it necessary to veil her deficiencies, by surrounding herself with all the pomp which could be assumed. She therefore had state apartments fitted up for herself, kept a separate table, and in every respect took upon herself the honours that could be arrogated by a titled abbess. Meanwhile, the Sœur Flavie Passart continually acted as a thorn in her side; using every means to render her despicable and ridiculous in the eyes of her new community. The abbess Dorothée, on the other hand, knowing by experience her intriguing spirit, began to fear that she might become the victim of similar plots, to those in which she had been a tool. In order to watch over the Sœur Flavie, she stationed herself at the turn, to scrutinise

all that went in and out of the monastery. She did not at all seem to consider how derogatory was such a mode of proceeding to her station as abbess, nor anticipate the derision and contempt, to which this strange mixture of state and meanness exposed her. From day to day, she became more and more perplexed. Wholly inadequate to the duties of her office; hated by the only person of talent in the community, and who, as her unsuccessful rival, gratified her wounded pride in tormenting her; unable to enforce discipline; now trying to obtain respect by unwonted state; now meanly watching lest plots should be formed against her; alternately treating her community with harshness, and conceding everything with a view to conciliate: such was the wretched life of this poor, unhappy, usurping abbess.

Nor was the state of the Sœur Flavie less miserable. Outwitted by the ecclesiastics, whose dupe she had become, and by the stupid Sœur Dorothée, her own tool; detested by the little community whom by her artifices she had gained over, but who with one voice reproached her for the thralldom she had led them into, and who were obedient to the Sœur Dorothée, only in tormenting her; and unable to escape the tyranny of the abbess, whom she so heartily despised; her high spirit was completely borne down, and she was reduced to so abject a state of wretchedness, that she did little else but weep from morning till night.

Yet she was not happy enough to see the hand of GOD in her humiliation, and to acknowledge that it was a just punishment for all her prevarications, and her wretched ingratitude and treachery, or even as a warning voice, to lead her to repentance. She had imprisoned her mothers and her sisters. She was the cause of the unjust ejection of her legitimate superiors and benefactors; and the just GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, and who punishes men by their own crimes, permitted her, by her own machinations, to throw herself into a thralldom which was most odious, and under the dominion of one who became her scourge. Thus the inhabitants of Sichem—after having slain the seventy sons of Gideon, who had exposed his life to deliver them from the Midianites—chose for king, Abimelech, a base person, who became to the very individuals to whom he owed his ill-gotten crown, a devouring fire. Three, out of the seven nuns who had joined the Sœurs Flavie and Dorothée, were so miserable under their tyranny, and so tortured by remorse, that they found means to interest their relations at court, for their emancipation; and obtained a mandate for their return to Port Royal des Champs. The others, who were of less note, were less fortunate, though equally anxious for their deliverance. Meanwhile the very serious diminution in the revenues of Port Royal de Paris excited apprehension. The abbess to

conciliate the public, and to unite her refractory community, was continually giving magnificent entertainments; nay, she even went the length of giving a ball in the exterior of the convent. The disorders of their finances, urged them to make fresh demands against Port Royal des Champs; but after much litigation on the part of the clergy, the king refused to ratify their unjust claim, saying, "If Port Royal de Paris chooses to give a ball, Port Royal des Champs shall not be taxed to find fiddles."

The archbishop having now succeeded in wresting the house of Port Royal de Paris, from that of Port Royal des Champs, and having established the abbess Dorothée in the former, determined — since nothing more was to be gained by further contention — to separate the two communities entirely, and to remove to Port Royal des Champs all the nuns from whom he could not obtain the signature of the formulary. In pursuance of this resolution, he determined to send back the twenty-three nuns he had imprisoned in different monasteries, and also those — thirteen in number — who were in the house of Port Royal de Paris, when the abbess Dorothée and her six nuns took possession.

Before we proceed to the account of their return, we will close this long chapter by one amongst the large collection of excellent letters written to the community of Port Royal, by their pastor, M. de

St. Marthe, during the captivity of the nuns, and his own exile from his flock.

*Letter from M. de St. Marthe to the community of  
Port Royal des Champs.*

“October, 1664.

“My dear Sisters,

“The blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ ever abide with you! Your present state calls you, in an especial manner, to humble yourselves under the hand of Almighty GOD, as under that of a good Father who chastens you in mercy, and for your benefit. For He chastens every child whom He receives into His household, and for whom He prepares His inheritance. Be content to endure all manner of affliction, provided He be with you in those afflictions. Rejoice that for His sake, you lose every earthly possession; since, without doubt, He will give Himself to you, in the place of all that He deprives you of. Does it rend your heart to be torn from the counsel of your spiritual mothers, and the society of your sisters? Remember that the very wound it inflicts is sent in mercy, and in order to heal you. Be patient under the means by which your Heavenly Father sees needful to break your ties to earth; submit to the correction of what is still too human and earthly in your affections, in order that your charity may become thoroughly



purified. You will love GOD more undividedly, your affection for your mothers and sisters will be more holy ; and remember that perfect love to GOD, and perfect love in Him to His creatures, is the complete health of the human soul. Learn to say with St. Paul, that you glory in being crucified with Jesus Christ your Lord ; and may you be enabled to go on to say with him, that nothing is able to separate you from Jesus Christ. Love to bear the yoke of Christ ; a yoke that is never borne, without a greater weight of blessing. And if at any time it should appear to you hard to support, do not repine because of its apparent weight. Recollect it is the sickness of the soul, not the heaviness of the cross, which makes it hard to bear. Seek then divine help, to increase your love ; cast off the burthen of earthly attachments and passions ; these are the real causes that bow you down, and debilitate the soul. Wait then, my dear sisters, upon the Lord ; so shall you ‘ mount on wings like eagles, you shall run and not be weary, you shall walk and not faint.’

“Jesus Christ whom you love was crucified ; He whose disciples we are ‘ became obedient unto death ; even the death of the cross.’ Will you not then suffer all things to unite in crucifying your sins ; when your sins crucified Him who was without sin ? Those whom God permits to persecute and oppress, have only power to do so, as far as He sees it to be



necessary for the discipline of His children. It is *their* office to try us by fire, it is *ours* to endure the purifying furnace. If we love not the world, we should surely be well content that the world should not love us.

“Courage, my dear sisters! submit in faith to the crucifixion of spiritual, as well as of natural delights; for even in that did our Lord set us an example. If during the long and weary hours of a close imprisonment, your Lord appears occasionally to withdraw His presence, and to leave you like the spouse in the Canticles, who sought her beloved and could not find Him because of the darkness of the night, possess your souls in patience, until His return, until the Sun of righteousness arise above the limited horizon of your view, with healing in his beams. Jesus Christ does not really abandon you. The more He is concealed from your view, the more intimately does He enter your heart. Without inspiring sensible joy, He will yet prove your assured strength, and your eternal salvation, your Shepherd, your Redeemer, your Deliverer; the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He will fight with you, and you will triumph with Him. ‘Confidite; ego vici mundum.’

“Since then no persecution can befall you but in accordance with the views of a GOD of love con-

cerning you, it is a contradiction in terms, for a disciple to feel anything but love and kindness to those who are the instruments of fulfilling the will of GOD in his behalf. Let us then manifest our sincere union with the designs of GOD, by loving those *visible* enemies, who are generally the most powerful instruments in helping us to detect and conquer our *invisible* ones, which are the worst of all.

“In order to profit by the ill-usage you may receive, beseech of GOD, that no vain anxieties may interrupt the tranquillity of your communion with Him, and that no want of charity, may disturb your love for your persecutors. Once more, in your patience possess ye your souls, not that you should yield a culpable and blind obedience to your temporal or ecclesiastical superiors, when they require of you that which is contrary to conscience ; rather imitate the holy angels, who remained steadfast in the faith, though Lucifer their superior, commanded their revolt ; but then, while like the holy angels, you are steadfast, in your adhesion to GOD, do not resist even Satan with railing accusations. The Christian conquest is a conquest not of force of arms against your brethren, but by intensity and fervour of divine love.

“Fear not, though persecution should rage, until you have no place whereon to rest the sole of your foot. The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air

their nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head. Do not even be astonished, though every place of outward worship should be shut to you. If we have no religious house wherein to seek Christ on earth, He will assuredly come and dwell in the temple of our hearts. Nothing is so little as a humble and contrite heart; and yet nothing is so exalted, since GOD delights to make it the place of His abode. ‘O humilitas, angusta tibi ampla Salvatori.’

“The name of a prison appears indeed horrible, but if the Holy Spirit abide in us, wherever we are we have the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. If truth enter the prison walls with us, and increase in us there, it will deliver us more and more from the power of the father of lies. If, for Christ’s sake, we are the prisoners of unjust and cruel men, we have the consolation of knowing that we are the Lord’s freemen. The wicked carry their prison about with them wherever they go; because their own heart is a dark dungeon and their passions adamantine chains; whilst those whom Christ has made free are free indeed, even in the midst of bonds.

“Jesus Christ is come a light into the world; and those unhappy persons who love the world, and prefer darkness to light, have their eyes so blinded by earthy mists, that whilst persecuting the children of GOD, they cannot see the gulf which yawns beneath them. Whereas if the eye be single, Christ

will be our light even amidst the darkness of the gloomy dungeon. Let us then believe, that the happiest spot for the Christian is not always that which to sense appears the brightest ; but rather that in which he is the most frequently compelled to cast himself upon God ; and where outward circumstances, by affording him the most frequent exercises of humility, charity, and patience, yield him most facilities for practising the tempers, and receiving the impress of his Divine Master. When therefore you are beset by trials, seek not to escape from the hand of him who binds you to the cross. The way of tribulation is the way of the kingdom, the only path which leads to glory. If the ground of your heart be harrowed, it is under the careful and sympathising eye of the good husbandman ; expect therefore with patience an abundant harvest ; ‘ *Confidite in Domino, et mane in loco tuo.*’

“ Whilst, however, you maintain love for your persecutors, be not shaken from your steadfastness, either by their mistakes or subtleties. A disciple, thanks be to God, is not called to waste his time and strength in unravelling the long and intricate web of sophisms, elaborated by false teachers ; the test applied by our Saviour is simple and compendious, ‘ *by their fruits ye shall know them.*’ When spiritual teachers resort to courses of conduct and proselytism, not only unprecedented in scripture,

but wholly opposed to that practised by the apostles, we have solid ground for believing that the doctrines themselves, which demand so different a method of promulgation, must also be different. Now the apostles never resorted to force or to any worldly incitement either of pleasure or pain, to compel the will. They never persecuted nor flattered the world, to make it renounce its errors. In the case of those immediately sent forth by the Great Shepherd Himself, they, like Him, laid down their lives for the sheep; but where shall we find any kind of justification of a persecuting priesthood in the whole New Testament scriptures? Beware then of the doctrines of those whose practice is so wholly opposed to that of the Lord they profess to serve. The world was wont to persecute the church, not the church the world. Now neither the world nor the church change their natures. Where then we see worldly practices resorted to, we may safely conclude that it is not the spirit of Christ, but that of the world in disguise which has crept into the church, which is the agent, and that for the gratification of its own purposes.

“ It remains to say something of my own disposition, that you may pray GOD for me. GOD knows my weakness, which is no doubt the reason He has not yet appointed me to severe combats. However whenever He sees fit to call me out, I trust He will become my strength. If I have not been found

worthy to give you an example, I trust I shall be enabled to follow yours; and as you have been ready to lay down your lives for the truth, I am encouraged to hope, that I too may be ready to lay down mine for you.

“It seems to me, that we are just now placed very much in a similar predicament to that of the church in the time of the emperor Julian. This apostate caused his statue to be erected in a place of public resort, and in the midst of several idols. And the soldiers were required in passing, to salute the image of the emperor. Christian soldiers thus found themselves in a double difficulty. If they saluted the emperor, they passed for idolaters, and were cast out by the Christians — if they refused, they were executed by the magistrates, not as Christians, but as traitors to the emperor.

“Yours, my dear Sisters, in our Lord,

“With much consideration,

“ST. MARTHE.”

Will the reader permit us to insert one other letter of M. de St. Marthe? It was addressed to an abbess who had adopted the reform, and was in correspondence with Port Royal, and is by no means particularly connected with the history of that house; excepting so far as it exhibits the spirit of their pious director. It is inserted here, simply because it



appears to contain advice so universally valuable and applicable, that it was thought it might prove both useful and acceptable.

*Letter from M. de St. Marthe to the Abbess of L.*

“ My Reverend Mother,

“ If I have not hitherto spoken particularly to you of your own spiritual state, it has not arisen from any wish to dissemble painful truths, but solely from not being aware that I had anything to communicate on the subject; and I think it against the order of GOD, to make an effort in our own will and understanding, officiously to execute as His minister, a commission with which He has not truly charged us; or to deliver in His name, that which is not really His message.

“ But the office I at present hold in relation to your house having latterly laid your spiritual state upon my conscience, I will now simply note down a few observations, which have arisen in my mind, whilst bearing you on my heart before GOD, in prayer; leaving them with you to accept or to reject, as His Spirit — the alone effectual guide into all truth — shall direct you.

“ Let me, however, previously offer a few remarks on the mode of receiving spiritual advice. It often pleases GOD, not only immediately to enlighten us by the teaching of His Spirit, without any outward in-



strumentality, but likewise often mediately to instruct us, through the instrumentality of His servants.

“ When He who is the Truth Itself, vouchsafes to become our immediate instructor, it is obvious that the instruction must be perfect, and that it needs no consideration on the part of His fallible creatures, to know whether it is to be adopted, or with what limitation. But the case is far different when that teaching is conveyed through the medium of men.

“ When spiritual advice is conveyed, even through the most eminent of His servants, though the treasure is of GOD, it has passed through the channel of an earthen vessel, and therefore acquires always more or less tincture therefrom. Hence, whenever we receive instruction from our fellow creatures, we should carefully weigh it in the balance of the sanctuary; lest, on the one hand, we reject the message of GOD, because of the unsuitable form in which it may be conveyed; or lest on the other, we prove guilty of leaning on an arm of flesh, by hastily adopting, unexamined, advice, a large portion of which may not be intended for us. GOD reserves to Himself the thorough knowledge of every heart. He alone can provide every one his meat in due season; and that which is offered by the best of men, must after all be weighed and selected by him who receives it, lest he should, on the one hand, rashly reject much that may be valuable; and, on the other,

as rashly adopt, a great deal which is irrelevant or unsuitable.

“ Before then I proceed to give advice, I beseech you to weigh it very thoughtfully and in the spirit of prayer.

“ Having thus said, how it appears to me, that the advice of Christian brethren should be received, I will freely say, that it seems to me, that your principal error consists in bearing yourself towards the sisters with less condescension and kindness than you ought. You are apt to feel impatient when they do not at once enter into your reasons, or readily adopt your superior lights ; and you sometimes remain too much surprised — may be perhaps a little grieved — at the occasionally reluctant submission you find in them.

“ May I not say to you freely, that this defect arises from a root of that very pride which caused the heresy of Pelagius, and which it is so difficult to eradicate from the human heart. Although we possess a full internal spiritual conviction, that the grace of Jesus Christ alone can effect the conversion of the human soul ; yet the self love of fallen nature makes us feel, as if our words were sufficient to convert hearts and to eradicate the besetting sins and evil habits of those over whom we are placed. How is it, that when it needed an operation of grace from above to change our own hearts, that we should so

easily flatter ourselves, that it is enough that we should only speak, to correct the faults of those who are under our guidance? And how can we so soon forget the superhuman power, and the long suffering, necessary to influence us, as to be surprised whenever we have said something to enlighten them, to find them still wandering in darkness? When it required the beam of the Sun of Righteousness, to enlighten us, ought we to wonder, that it should require more than the dim taper of human illumination, to enlighten them? This secret sentiment of pride and self love, which imperceptibly lurks at the bottom of our hearts, is the cause of our occupying ourselves too much in condemning the weakness of others; and we forget those means by which we really ought to co-operate with GOD in their salvation. We talk, and exhort, and reprove, beyond measure. But do we pray and mourn for them in secret? We do not sufficiently wait for GOD, but seek to go before His hour. We do not feel a charitable patience for the weakness of feeble souls; and we do not take a sufficiently maternal care, not to impose on them burthens, which they cannot yet bear; and which would only serve to overwhelm them. Sometimes again, through the same unwatchfulness, we leave them in their infirmities through our negligence, and omit telling them truths when GOD has really opened their ears to hear: and when they are

truly hungering, we do not take care to present them with solid bread to make them grow. It follows from thence, that not considering the faults of others, with the charity we owe them, we easily slide into a pharisaic spirit. We feel so much impatience at the faults of our sisters, only because we flatter ourselves we have not similar ones; whereas, perhaps it is our self love only which prevents our seeing and condemning them in ourselves, in a still greater degree.

“ You must consider, my Mother, at the age you have attained, the respect in which you are held, and the obedience which is accustomed to be rendered to you, form so many evils, concealing many defects which might otherwise appear in you, if you were reduced to the level of those who are subject to you. And besides, whatever virtue you may have, Christian humility should make you consider all the faults of those you direct, as though you had yourself committed them. For since you have nothing of yourself that separates and distinguishes you from the most imperfect: since you have within you, the very same root of corruption and frailty; you will allow, that you cannot without presumption, profess any advantage above others. If it be true, that we who hold spiritual offices, exercise our ministry after the example of Jesus Christ, we shall charge ourselves with all the sins of our community, and esteem our-

selves not less obliged to grieve over them, than those who have in person committed them. And as we are ourselves members of the same body with the most imperfect of our sisters, and still more, if we are the heads of that body, we shall be animated with the same desire for their perfection, which we feel for our own; we shall exercise the same patience in their infirmities, we do under *our own*; and we shall have a sedulous care to mortify that natural activity, which leads us to irritation, against persons, rather than against their sins. If it be true, that we have a solid and sincere desire to serve souls, the first thing in which that desire will appear, will be, to avoid all faults or weaknesses in ourselves, which may place any stumbling block in the way of those we lead, and which might render our corrections useless, because we do not give them in the right manner—because they are not given in wisdom and in love; and because we rather follow our own natural inclination and spirit, in administering them, than the teaching of the Spirit of God. Do not fear *gentleness*, if you are truly *faithful*. Whatever may be our gentleness, if it proceeds from a true Christian charity, we shall not have the *less force*, in mortifying those who need it; but we shall have *more light* to do so in the manner, and according to the mind of Jesus Christ. We shall afflict them, and strike them for their benefit; and we shall at the same time hold them by the hand,

and sustain them, lest they should fall into discouragement, or into a cross, untoward spirit, which would make them resist instruction. And now my dear sister, that we may have a perfect pattern of the line of conduct to pursue towards them, let us observe that of GOD, the Holy Spirit—the true Teacher of His church—in reproving, in consoling, and in admonishing us.

“I have no doubt, my dear Mother, but that you have charity enough, to receive well what I propose to you so freely; and even though I should be mistaken in many points, I doubt not but your humility will receive that which may be suitable in what I have said; and that you will kindly do me the same good office; that we may both be faithful imitators of Him who hath said, ‘Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.’”

## CHAP. X.

JOURNAL OF THE MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE DE ST. JEAN.—STATE OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.—EXCELLENT LETTER OF M. DE ST. MARTHE, TO THE COMMUNITY OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.—RECLUSES.

THE division having been effected between the monasteries of Port Royal de Paris and Port Royal des Champs, those nuns who had been exiled by the direction of the archbishop, were to be recalled. They had now passed ten months in a rigorous captivity; not only separated from each other, but imprisoned in the communities to which they were sent, and allowed to hold communication with no one. The venerable Mère Agnès, however, on account of her advanced age, and her frequent apoplectic seizures, was allowed to have one of her nieces with her. Their captivity was now to terminate; or rather, their captivity in foreign houses was to cease; and they were to be reunited in their own monastery of Port Royal des Champs. The following narration is extracted from the Sœur Angélique de St. Jean's account of her return.



“ I had fully persuaded myself that our long exile would terminate in the tomb, when on the fourth of July, at nine in the morning, the abbess, Me. de Rantzau, came to pay me a visit, and told me with a joyful countenance, that she brought me good news, and that the Abbé de la Motte was just come from the archbishop, to know if I should like to visit the Mère Agnès, at the monastery of St. Mary, from which I might perhaps return to Port Royal des Champs. My astonishment was almost beyond belief. So that I could only say, I was ready for whatsoever the will of God had appointed: for the news seemed so bright, that I feared to believe it; supposing it was a snare to enhance our disappointment, and fearing lest its bitterness should prove an occasion of falling. After dinner, the M. de Rantzau returned to sit with me, and showed me the greatest affection, saying with tears in her eyes, how wretched it was to have been compelled to become my jailer; and rejoicing in the hope of showing me every kindness, as long as I might yet stay. I thanked the community for all the kindness they had shown me; at which those present blushed; but I am sure they did all their orders allowed them to do. As I knew they had long wished to learn modelling in wax, I offered, now that they had liberty to converse with me, to teach them the art. And as I had many preparations to make for my return, I determined to sit

up all night to arrange my own concerns, that I might be at liberty to give them this pleasure next day. This day I devoted to finishing a reliquary I had begun for them; and to making them a wax crucifix, which I did not finish till nine at night, when I retired to my cell to pray, and to say complin; after which I proposed making my little preparations, which I had scarcely begun, when I heard many footsteps approaching my room. As the hour had long since struck, at which the nuns go to bed in summer, I could not imagine what it could be; when the door opened, and Me. de Rantzau appeared, holding a candle in one hand, and a paper in the other. I rose to meet her, when she said with great surprise, (and I think feeling,) ‘My sister, an almoner of the archbishop is just arrived with a coach, and here is his order to convey you away immediately.’ I confess I was not a little surprised at being sent for at such an unseasonable hour. I made haste to collect my papers and clothes; in the mean time, the officers of the monastery who were already in bed, very kindly rose to bid me farewell, and, notwithstanding all my remonstrances they would accompany me to the door. When I entered the court they saw it was already dark, and they did not like to allow me to traverse the streets of Paris at such an hour. Me. de Rantzau begged me to enter into the choir, whilst she went to the ecclesiastic who was to accompany me,

to request him to defer my departure till morning ; I then entered the choir, and prostrating myself anew in spirit before the Good Shepherd, under whose care I had placed myself at the beginning of my exile, I said with all my heart, ‘ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me ! ’ There are indeed many darknesses to be feared in this life far more terrible than external darkness, through which we may nevertheless walk with assurance of not falling, by the help of His grace which is ever sufficient for us ! Soon afterwards the Mother called me, and said, there was no way of deferring it, that the archbishop insisted on my going immediately. She then said how sorry she should be to part from me : I threw myself at Madame de Rantzau’s feet, and begged her pardon and that of the community, for any trouble I might have given them. Me. de Rantzau embraced me with the utmost tenderness and affection, as did likewise all the other nuns ; they then conducted me to the door, and bade me a final adieu. An ecclesiastic and a female received me, and I stepped into the carriage with them. I knew where I was going, but was unacquainted with the road ; nor could I discover where about we were, for it was pitch dark, and there were no lights, excepting here and there a candle in the shops we occasionally passed. When we had proceeded a little way the

coach stopped. The ecclesiastic got out. I perceived we were at the gate of a convent, and I concluded he was about to bring me a companion; but as I did not know in what part of Paris I was, it was impossible to guess who it was. We waited above three quarters of an hour. Not a word had yet been spoken by any of the party; at length the lady broke silence, by observing, 'it was a very undue hour to conduct nuns, but that it could not be otherwise, as the archbishop returned so late from St. Germain.' I replied, 'Madame, it is but fit that nuns should be as ready at all hours to obey the will of GOD, as their ecclesiastical superiors are to obey the will of the court.' 'Alas, Madame,' replied she, 'few except the inhabitants of Port Royal, could suffer so much, so cheerfully.' She then embraced the opportunity of the ecclesiastic's absence to say, 'that it was well known no other persons would have endured what we had with so much constancy, and that whatever the court party might do, the world at large espoused our cause.' I cut short this discourse, wishing to spend the time in silence and prayer, for which I had full leisure. At length, the moon rising in cloudless majesty in the heavens, and her peaceful light gilding the silent and solitary streets, I could not but recollect that beautiful promise of God, that 'The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night;' I felt that He had

preserved me from evil, and above all, that He had preserved my soul; and I trusted that He who had watched over my going out, would also sustain me by His grace, in my going in, and that from this time forth, even for evermore.

“After waiting a long time, the ecclesiastic returned, accompanied by a nun, whom he seated in the carriage beside me. It was too dark to recognise either her countenance or figure; but I had no time to doubt who it might be, for she threw herself on my neck, exclaiming, ‘O my dear aunt!’ I replied, ‘My dear child!’ This was every word we spoke at this interview, and during the whole way; but these two words from the abundance of the heart, sufficed to make us know each other, and to fill our hearts with consolation, of which the first principle being spiritual, though it was also natural, was first to be enjoyed in gratitude and silence before Him, who was its first object and its true cause. This experience made me understand, what Mary Magdalene felt at hearing herself called by her name by Jesus Christ, whom she took to be the gardener, and the answer which she made, in saying the single word ‘Rabboni!’ Certainly this mutual recognisance includes all in a truly spiritual friendship. How often the multiplicity of demonstrations and of words, injures the principle of true joy and satisfaction, by troubling the heart and disturbing the action of

thanksgiving, which should be first rendered to GOD, in order to consecrate wholly to Him the first fruits of a rich harvest sown in so many tears. Then, indeed, I began to feel my heart overflow with joy. I had before both supposed the news of our liberation doubtful, and also feared, lest I might learn that some of my sisters had fallen through the severity of our persecution, and the rigour of their confinement; but the joy at once more meeting that dear child, whom God had sustained in so terrible a trial, especially at her tender age, inspired me with such good hopes that all my fears vanished, and I only thought of praising GOD, who gave us such sweet earnest of His great mercy, and who began to bind up our wounds, by restoring us to each other.

“The remainder of our journey was very long, or rather tedious. We were six in number, and we felt almost suffocated with heat, in our serge religious dresses, and shut up, in the month of July, in a coach, all the windows of which were closed. The night seemed darker and darker, as the hour became later, and the candles in the shops were extinguished. We had neither flambeau nor lantern; so that in many places it was so completely dark, that we all fully expected we should be overturned every moment. I searched my own heart, to discover if I felt any alarm; but it seemed to me a folly and contradiction to dread anything, when the conscience has no



reason to fear death. For if we had been overturned, or murdered by the banditti, who at this time infested Paris, we should, after all, have died as certainly in obedience to the appointment of GOD, as those martyrs whose death is so much more glorious before men. After all, true peace must consist in peace of conscience. The true light which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world, is the alone light, which no outward storms and tempests can extinguish. When that light is burning, the wise virgins need not fear the obscurity of night; nor will the lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, be able to gain advantage over them; whereas when the oil of interior peace is wanting to a soul, because of unfaithfulness to GOD, it trembles, even when there is no ground of anxiety. The darkness of the conscience, at one and the same time, leading us to fear men, yet rendering us insensible to the tremendous danger of offending that GOD, in whose hands are the lives of all his creatures.

“ Thus we proceeded, each silently conversing with GOD, in her heart, during the whole way; which was prolonged to two hours and a half; because we both proceeded slowly, and met with several serious detentions. For when we reached the gates of the city, we found them shut, and were obliged to wait till they were opened, which detained us some time. We were again kept waiting much longer at



the gate of the convent of St. Mary, in the suburb, where we had to remain above half an hour, before the *tourrières* of the convent were roused from their slumbers; after which they had to wake the nuns, before they could get at the keys of the outward gate, leading from the street into the exterior court of the monastery. Whilst we were waiting, I unexpectedly heard a bell, which I immediately recognised as that of the Carthusians, which struck the second stroke for matins; that is, it was eleven o'clock at night. I cannot describe my joy at hearing this bell, which I had so often heard in our house at Paris; and in thus discovering, that I was in the immediate vicinity of our poor desolate Zion, of which I had neither seen nor heard anything during the time of our captivity. After a considerable time had elapsed, the great gate was opened, and the carriage drove into the court of St. Mary's where we had another long station to perform. For the nuns, who had not the least expectation of our arrival at such an hour, were not prepared to receive us; and being all in bed and asleep, it required some time to dress, for they do not sleep in their clothes, as we do. At length they made their appearance; so that just before midnight struck, and before the day of visitation ended, they received this extraordinary midnight visit; the pleasure of which was greater to us than to them; though we must bear full testimony to

their great charity, in the lively interest they manifested in the extreme joy of their prisoners, at this emancipation. It was the mother superior herself, and five or six other nuns, who came to meet us at the door. So many events, and so many feelings crowded on the heart and mind, that I cannot in the least recollect what either party said or did ; I only know, that all which the kindest hearts can evince of sympathy and joy, in the happiness of others, these good mothers abundantly showed ; and indeed they exhibited much more joy than I did, my own heart being troubled with conflicting hopes and fears, as to what might follow, and as to the state in which we might meet our exiled sisters. But all my suspense vanished, and I no longer thought of bonds and imprisonment when I beheld our two sisters, who had been imprisoned in this convent, freed, and running to meet us at the door. It was not till after I had embraced them, that I learnt that one of them was actually then suffering from a fever, (though she quitted her bed to see us,) and that our dear and venerable Mère Agnès was altogether confined to her bed, through the hardships, and privations, and anxieties, undergone in the long period of their imprisonment. I seemed at once to receive from God an hundred-fold for all we had endured ; and I longed to go up to the Mère Agnès, who was looking for-

ward with equal pleasure, to once more seeing me, her niece.

“ We first however, went to the altar, to pour out our hearts in mutual thanksgivings; for how could we ever sufficiently thank our Good Shepherd, who—not satisfied with pouring out His life for us—had guided and watched over us during our captivity, and who had now become our Deliverer, and reunited us to each other.

“ From the church we went up to the room of the Mère Agnès, who received me with a joy, like that with which holy angels receive souls escaped from the snares of the evil one, and let loose from the prison of this world: I shall not attempt to relate, either her feelings or my own; no words can convey them adequately. The good mother of St. Mary, took a sisterly part in our joy; but after a little while very kindly left us, to pour out our hearts to each other without restraint. They wished however, first to prepare us beds, but I told them, that I had already taken measures to stay up all night, before I knew I should spend the night in their house; and my sister Magdaleine Christine, said she would prefer to sit up with me.

“ It was past midnight, and these good mothers knew we were to set out very early for Port Royal des Champs; so that we had only just time to exchange greetings, and to realise our reunion. Indeed

it was like a dream. I sat a little while with the Mère Agnès, but durst not stay long, for at her great age, sleep and rest were absolutely necessary. I found her full of grace and strength, and after my long anguish at our separation, and all the false reports circulated about her, which had torn my heart, the relief I felt, and my joy and thankfulness cannot be described. After bidding her a good night, I hastened to rejoin my other sisters. They both clung around me, and told me all that had befallen them; their persecutions, privations, and the support they had received. From them, I first received the joyful tidings of the firmness of all our sisters; of the constancy and noble conduct of my companion, the Sœur Magdaleine Christine, of which I knew not a word; and of the constancy and generosity of our holy bishops; above all of M. d'Alêt, who amongst others, my persecutors had tried by every means to make me believe, had abandoned the truth, and had turned against us. I was then informed of the multitude of friends, whom GOD had not only preserved in the truth but had raised up to defend it, and to justify our innocence by public apologies. On hearing such joyful tidings, of numbers whom I had been falsely told had fallen, with a view to shake my confidence in the truth; and after having long imagined, like Elijah, that I alone was left to worship

the GOD of our fathers, my heart was overwhelmed with joy, like that of the Prophet when he learned how many there still were who had not bowed the knee to Baal. But I could only speak to GOD; and tears of joy and thankfulness, alone showed the almost painful excess of my joyous gratitude for His great goodness, in having not only reunited us, but preserved our souls. I was so overwhelmed, that at every new tidings, I was ready to say, it is enough! for it seemed more than my frame could bear. For all was as new to me, as though I were risen from a sepulchre, after being buried for ten long months; my sisters meanwhile could not refrain from tears, when they found how rigorous my captivity had been. I knew nothing, not even the most public pieces of intelligence, so that things almost forgotten by the public, were new to me. I knew nothing of the establishment of strange nuns in Port Royal des Champs, nor of the horrible conduct of the Sœur Flavie, nor that Port Royal de Paris was wrested from us, and erected into a new monastery. Yet amidst these distressing news of temporal losses, there was the rich consolation of being assured of the spiritual strength and health of my beloved sisters; so that I seemed borne down with the full tide of blessings, and I knew not how to be thankful enough, for having been sustained under the false informations, which were continually brought to me, of

the defection of those amongst our sisters and mothers whom we most valued.

“ Completely overpowered by these conflicting feelings, I consented, as I was importunately urged, to lie down a little; not that it would have been possible to sleep, but I needed to breathe a little, and to pour out my heart to GOD in silence, as a necessary relief, amidst the overwhelming riches of natural and spiritual joy which He had heaped upon me; so that the presence even of those dearly loved and newly restored friends, seemed almost a restraint, till I had poured out the fulness of my thanksgiving to Him who is above all friends. I accordingly threw myself on a bed, which the kindness of the mothers had prepared, and rested for about three quarters of an hour; after which I rose and hastened to write a few lines, to the various dear, and tried, and faithful friends who had done so much for us, and borne so much with us, to acquaint them with the joyful news of our deliverance.

“ Meanwhile my Sœur Angélique Thérèse, who had a feverish complaint, and our dear Mère Agnès, slept, and my Sœur Magdaleine Christine was employed in packing for them. After this, we all said matins together; and I know not how it was, but there was not one word in the office, which did not seem chosen expressly for us; as if to lead us to praise the mercies of GOD, which indeed seemed in



one tide, to fill and overflow all our hearts, and souls, and senses.

“Day soon came, as I was still writing ; when the nun who attended the Mère Agnès, came to ask how we were? and to invite her new guests, to see the house and gardens of the convent, which are particularly beautiful, and which they wished us to see thus early, thinking we might be sent for. In short, they seemed by every civility and kindness in their power to show the great affection and esteem they felt for us, and how truly joyful they were, at being emancipated from the odious task of being our jailers. They took us to visit their cloisters, the chapter house, the community room, the refectory, and their kitchen. All are very handsome, in excellent order, and as much ornamented as may be allowable in a religious house. We afterwards proceeded to the garden, in which is a Calvary and a magnificent sepulchre. We had not however leisure to stay there long ; for we almost immediately heard the bell of the turn ring loudly, and a messenger appeared to inform us that an almoner of the archbishop was arrived, to escort us. The carriage, he added, was waiting ; and that as no time was to be lost, we were commanded to come without the least delay. It was then half-past five in the morning, and the M. Agnès was not yet risen. She however rose hastily, and came down immediately ; for they



allowed us no time to take leave of any person, except the few nuns who happened to be at that moment accompanying us. The Mère Superior, who had very kindly prepared breakfast for us in the refectory, constrained us however to take some refreshment. We then took leave, on both sides with every mark of affection and civility; and I who had only been with them six hours had more thanks to give than all the others; having received nothing from them but the most attentive kindness and sympathy. Our sisters who had been imprisoned there, had indeed other treatment to remember; but which they had every reason to believe it was as painful for these mothers to inflict, as for them to suffer.

“The Mère Agnès then entered the coach, with her four daughters, accompanied by a tourrière of St. Mary. The almoner of the archbishop escorted us on horseback. We began our journey by saying *prime* together. The office being ended, I pulled out a little Bible, bound in one volume, which I always carry about me; and handed it to the M. Agnès, who opened it, to see what it would please GOD to give us. These are the words which presented themselves; and which were spoken by one of his prophets, who perhaps saw us in spirit, amongst the vast flock, ransomed by the blood of the Redeemer. ‘Woe to those shepherds, who destroy and tear the flock of my pasture, saith the

Lord. Therefore, doth the Lord, who is GOD of Israel, say to those shepherds, who lead my people; ye have dispersed my flock, ye have driven them out, and ye have not visited them. But as for me, I will visit on you the malice of your hearts; and I will assemble the remnants of my flock, from all the places where ye have dispersed them; I will bring them back to their own house; (in our case Port Royal des Champs) and they shall grow and shall multiply. I will establish over them pastors, who shall guide them; they shall no longer apprehend anything, or have fear, nor shall any one of their number perish.'

“Can any one, who believes in a particular providence, doubt that every, even the most trivial incident, is not fortuitous? Who, in the whole range of the Old and New Testaments, could have discovered a passage more literally applicable to what had already passed in our community, and to the present occasion of our return? We did indeed feel, that GOD was now beginning, by our restoration to Port Royal des Champs, to assemble the remnant of His flock; that is, all who through His mercy had escaped from so many perils and temptations, by the power of His grace, which alone had rendered them steadfast and immovable. Those also, who had for a time fallen under the power of the enemy, had been snatched from his hands, by that

Good Shepherd who does not allow one of His sheep to perish, which the Father has given into His hand. O how great is the strength and protection of His grace, to them who look to Him alone !

“ After proceeding a little more than two miles, it appeared that one of the horses had lost a shoe which made him go lame. We were, however, obliged to proceed at a foot pace, as far as Chatillon, to the nearest blacksmith. There we were detained a considerable time, which at first appeared a very unseasonable interruption, but we soon found in this little circumstance, as in many others of greater importance, that what retarded our journey, enhanced our joy. For by this detention, our other sisters, exiled in different houses in Paris, who had set out rather later than ourselves, had time to join us. When we unexpectedly perceived the first carriage near at hand, and all the white dresses and bright scarlet crosses, which showed in the winding of the road, a little way behind, it is impossible to describe the transports of joy of both parties. As we were stationary, the carriage soon overtook us, and passed on ten or fifteen paces before us. All we could do, as it drove quickly by, was to salute each other, with a mutual exclamation of joy, which came from the inmost heart, and which could not be suppressed. This carriage was followed by another, and then another, and another, in all six carriages and evi-

dently full, but they drove past us so rapidly that we could only distinguish those who sat next the door on our side; for though they longed equally with ourselves, to have some communication, M. le Madre, who escorted them on horseback as the prisoners of the archbishop, would by no means suffer it, and ordered all the carriages to file on before us, excepting the last, which counting ours, made the seventh. This carriage remained behind, and stopped to wait for us, which it did the whole way, for we had very poor horses; and although it might have continually passed us, it always remained to bring up the rear; going on and stopping just as we did: the mystery of which we did not then penetrate, not knowing whom it contained.

“ We proceeded, still forming a file of seven coaches, and it was indeed a glorious procession; for every one who formed a part of it, (excepting those in the last carriage) praised God, and gloried in the cross of Christ. Thus we went on our way, till we past Jouy, where at the brow of the hill, we first descried the spire of our beloved Zion, so deeply mourned, so long and so earnestly desired! Here, the road being difficult, at the long and steep descent to the abbey, the carriages drew near to ours; and here it was we first saw and spoke to each other for one little moment: but what could be said in such transports of joy? I know not, to what the

spectacle could be compared; the liberated captives standing up in their carriages, stretching out their hands to each other, and making exclamations of joy at the sight of the Mère Agnès whom they had so often been threatened they should never behold again; and seeing me also amongst them, after the very faint expectation they entertained, that I should ever be allowed to return. It put me in mind of the resurrection of the dead, as our close and weary solitary confinement might be accounted a kind of sepulture. The first intelligible words that could be heard amidst our joyous exclamations, were praises and thanksgivings to GOD, who had so mercifully sustained us in steadfast fidelity to the testimony of His truth; and who already repaid our sufferings an hundred fold, by the great joy of our reunion. It was indeed, of all consolations, the greatest we could desire, after our cruel separation. It was yet an enhancement of happiness, as we from time to time recognised amongst the number of our sisters those whom we best loved, or those whom we thought they would certainly have withheld from us; especially when I saw my sister Candide le Cerf, and afterwards my sister Anne Gertrude, I knew not in what words to pour out my heart to GOD, for this triumph of grace, unless in the words of the Prophet. ‘*Dicant qui redempti sunt a Domino quos redemit de manu inimice et de regionibus con-*

gregavit eos.' Seeing both ourselves, and our sisters so overpowered with mercies — whether those He had preserved, or those He had brought back — it seemed as though we were all so melted into one heart and mind, that we could not return separate actions of thanks ; but that GOD had thus reunited us again, that we might with one heart and mind, sing one full anthem of praise, thanksgiving, blessing, and gratitude, for mercies, every one of which seemed equally to belong to the whole ; since every member alike belongs to the body, of which it is a part, and since to Him alone is each, and are all, indebted for everything they have and are.

“ We indeed felt so happy in the pleasure of being reunited, as almost to forget we were yet prisoners. We were however soon reminded of it, for when we descended the brow of our hill, which formerly used to be lined with the peasantry, with the tenants in their festival attire, holding their children, and with the poor ; all was silent and solitary. The cheerful sound of bells, and the sight of blazing bonfires in all directions, no longer greeted our eyes and ears, as had used to be the case, when the M. Angélique arrived, in days that were past. And as our unattended procession drove up to the great door, two of our faithful grey-headed old servants only, came to meet us, with tears in their eyes ; and on looking up, we found all the doors guarded by strangers, the



creatures of the archbishop ; and we were told that the last carriage which accompanied us, contained his grand vicar, official, and another ecclesiastic. It was indeed a cruel damping of our newly awakened joy, to discover we only exchanged separate prisons in foreign houses, for an imprisonment in our own house ; still the joy of meeting was so great, that it, for the time, overpowered every other feeling. Each carriage successively stopped at the door of the great court ; and with one heart and one accord, we spontaneously moved towards the grand portal of the church ; and in one instant that large and ancient Gothic pile was again filled by a goodly company, who by the white colour of their dresses, and their scarlet crosses, seemed to mark that they too, were amongst the innumerable multitudes, who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We prostrated ourselves with one accord at the feet of our Good Shepherd, who had thus re-assembled His dispersed sheep. He alone saw the movement of the heart of each ; and perhaps in that glad moment, they were all alike. We were thirty-six of us, who having been redeemed from our hopeless captivity, were now returned, and about to rejoin their company, who had been left in this house of Port Royal des Champs. Those who abode faithful in Port Royal de Paris, were expected to arrive on the morrow. That is our whole community, except-



ing seven : — viz. eighty-four choir nuns, and eighteen lay sisters. So that though bereft of our house of Paris, and of one third of our revenue ; we rejoiced that thenceforth, we should altogether form one unleavened bread, without malice, and in sincerity and truth ; and thus be able to present our whole body, one living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord.

“ Soon after, the mother prioress with the whole community, who had been expecting us with the impatience which may be imagined, came to open the door — ‘ *la porte des sacrements* ’ — which is the door leading from the exterior part of the church open to the public, in which we then were, into the monastic inclosure. The venerable M. Agnès first rose from the steps before the rail of the altar, where she was kneeling ; we with one accord fell back, that she might lead the way ; for though great age and fatigue made her steps feeble, yet we followed as sheep follow the steps of the aged shepherd who has long, and tenderly, and faithfully conducted them. The grand vicar and the officers conducted us to the door of inclosure, and never did captives feel so blessed a sense of joy and liberty as we did, when the well known monastic door of that beloved Zion, where we had spent so many blessed hours, closed behind us and restored us to all we loved and held sacred. It is in vain to express the mutual joy of both parties, but it

may be best imagined by those who know what perfect Christian union and friendship are ; and who can picture to themselves what we had suffered for a whole year. Our party just rescued from a horrible, solitary captivity, where each had, as it were, been buried alive ; in which all they loved in the world became, as it were, dead to them, and where they were constantly terrified by cruel threats, and by false news, invented to shake their constancy and to perplex their conscience ; whilst they were destitute, in many instances, even of the necessary comforts of life. The other party torn by the loss of thirty-six of their mothers and sisters, and the treachery of some of their own number, without being able to ascertain who, or how many, were guilty — by the loss of their goods, the domination of strangers, and the endeavour to sow disunion amongst them ; whilst the most terrible threats were constantly resorted to, and every door was guarded, to prevent any communication with friends and advisers without. Those I say, who can realise all these trials, may perhaps form some idea of our thankfulness and joy, at again embracing each other ; and recounting our various histories on that blessed, and joyful, and most memorable day, which was continually interrupted by tears and thanksgivings to GOD, who had so unexpectedly encompassed us about with songs of deliverance.

“ I cannot end this letter better, than by express-

ing an earnest hope, that we may be so established in the love of GOD, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the peace and communion of the Holy Ghost, that we may never be confounded; but that these blessings may form the solid foundation of that spiritual edifice, which it is the will of GOD to form in us.—That our temple may be built of living stones, tried and proved, and assembled from divers places, in this profound and retired valley, where we arrived just time enough to celebrate the festival of the dedication of our church, the anniversary of which was to be commemorated on the Sunday after our arrival, which took place on Friday.

“The thirty-six nuns who had been exiled, the thirteen faithful sisters from the monastery of Paris, who came the following day after the arrival of the former, and our large community which had remained here, being reunited, we completely filled our whole choir; and never did we sing with more consolation and spiritual joy, the anthem ‘*Hæc est domus Domini firmiter ædificata; bene fundata est supra firmam petram.*’—This is the house of GOD which is solidly built, which is firmly founded, because it is founded upon the rock.’ Because its only trust is on the sole grace of its Saviour, who said to us by His conduct over us, ‘I pity this crowd, &c., because, &c.’ which led us to observe, how our Saviour disposed every little circumstance and detail, so as to contribute to

our consolation and to the confirmation of our faith. Soli DEO, salvatori nostro, per Jesum Christum, dominum nostrum: gloria, et magnificentia; imperium et potestas; ante omne sæculum; et nunc, et in sæcula sæculorum. AMEN.

“Written at Port Royal des Champs, Nov. 28, 1665.

(Signed)

“Sœur ANGÉLIQUE DE ST. JEAN, (ARNAULD.)”

The Sœur Angélique was soon after chosen abbess, and the community flattered themselves with the hope of a peaceful enjoyment of their beloved seclusion. In this hope they were disappointed, for the house was immediately surrounded by an armed guard, and sentries were placed at every door. They were forbidden from even taking the air in their own gardens. They were deprived of their ministers; interdicted the sacraments; and declared rebels and heretics.

This iniquitous persecution lasted some years, during which time great numbers died, in consequence of the cruelties and insults they underwent. They expired, praying for their persecutors, though they were, even then, denied Christian communion, and after their death, refused the rites of Christian sepulture. It was at this juncture that M. Lancelot's letter was written to the M. Angélique de St.

Jean, whose constancy, prudence, and piety, throughout this heavy persecution, were the stay and support of the community.

During this season of trial, many most deeply interesting letters were sent them by their friends.

We select, as a sample, the following Letter of M. de St. Marthe, director of Port Royal des Champs, to the abbess of that monastery.

“ My dear Sister,—The cross is at once the Christian’s portion and his treasure. By the cross of Christ, divine justice has been satisfied, and the load of man’s debt cancelled; and in the path of the cross, disciples most frequently first meet with their Saviour, and they are most generally throughout their pilgrimage called to walk with Him. As Christ bore His cross and was crucified upon it, so are His disciples, in one sense, called upon to tread in the path which He trod, by each taking up his own individual cross. In so doing for His sake, we shall find the richest reward of grace; viz.—fellowship with Him, and increase of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in which the kingdom of God within us consists; and which can only be enjoyed in proportion as our carnal affections are crucified.

“ It is by means of afflictions, spiritually endured, that Christians crucify their earthly affections and lusts, that the body of sin is destroyed, and their

enemies are conquered. Truly may it be said ‘in hoc signo vinces.’ GOD who knows all things, best knows the evil of our nature, and He vouchsafes to us those tests, the application of which gradually reveals to His children their latent and unsuspected evils, while He also provides the remedies and discipline which they require. In proportion to the inclination of the natural man to evil, the path of the spiritual man must necessarily be fraught with crosses; because the one is diametrically opposite to the other. Happy then that child, whom the Heavenly Father so hedges in, as not to suffer him to escape from beneath His chastening hand. There is no greater mark that GOD accounts us His children, than that He not only sends us tribulations, but that he supports us under them, and walks with us through them. What we have to fear is—not the cross, but that we should be so unfortunate as not sufficiently to discern or esteem its uses, or should lack grace to profit by it, and to reap the whole of the rich harvest which the harrow was intended to prepare. Great indeed is the spiritual hardness of that heart, which does not feel thankful to GOD for treating it as He treated His own Son. It is indeed a miserable blindness to complain, when we ought rather to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for His sake. It is a grieving of the Holy Spirit to receive this great favour with sorrow and ingratitude; and



lastly, nothing more certainly shows our indifference to Christ Himself, than a disposition to reject the peculiar cross He offers to us. He little prizes His master, who refuses to be conformed to Him. The servant contemns his Lord, who spurns either His work, His sufferings or His livery.

“It is on this ground, that St. Peter, addressing the faithful of the Asiatic churches, tells them — in order to strengthen these newly converted disciples — not to be shaken, even though for a season they were in heaviness through manifold temptations, and though the trial of their faith were as by fire; but rather, to believe in Jesus Christ whom though not having seen they love, that they may notwithstanding their trials, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. St. James also exhorts us not only to rejoice when we are tempted by all sorts of afflictions; but, moreover, to make all our joy consist in these trials, because they are the means by which the Spirit of God shews a believer his corruptions, and enables him to resist them. ‘Count it all joy,’ he says, ‘when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.’ It is the same spirit that St. Paul evinces when he declares that he will only glory in the cross of Christ. Next to which, he appears to rejoice in being enabled to take up his own



cross, and to follow his crucified Lord. He only once, and that by constraint, alludes to his abundant revelations; but he discourses with us, throughout the whole of his epistles, of his bonds, his labours, and his persecutions; and he seems to esteem himself more favoured in having been called to chains and dungeons for the name of Christ, than in having been rapt into the third heaven.

“ Of all the delusions into which a spiritual man may fall, I know of none more deplorable, or which calls for deeper commiseration, than that of a professed disciple of Christ, on whom the cross is laid, but who mistakes its object and is ignorant of its value.— One who smarts under its rigour, but who does not feed on its unction — one who sinks beneath its weight, but does not enrich himself with the gold with which it is inlaid — one who viewing it with carnal eyes, or beholding it like the Jews with a veil over their eyes, sees neither the hand that inflicts it, nor the uses it is sent to work out — one who in short believes himself to be a true Christian, but who has never sunk deeply into a sense of the misery and evil of his own heart, and consequently has never felt that every step in the path of grace, must necessarily be contrary to nature. The true child of God, so far from desiring to shake off the cross, wishes rather to bear it all his days. When Christ says to him, ‘ Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly

in heart ; my yoke is easy and my burden is light,' the heart of the genuine disciple acquiesces with thanksgiving ; for he well knows that by coming to Him, he shall find rest to his soul, which is weary and heavy laden — not with bearing the cross of Christ — but with the burden of sin.

“Lord ! whither shall we go to learn these mysteries, so incomprehensible to worldly wisdom — whither shall we go, but to that self-same cross, the cross of Christ ? — that cross on which Thou didst suffer before the eyes of all, not only to pay a ransom for all, but to leave us an example of patience in enduring Thy heavy cross, to teach us how we should bear our light ones. It is by the cross that heaven is opened for us ; it is by the cross that earth is crucified to us. ‘O ! Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’

“Jesus Christ would only become our Saviour by the cross, and we can only become His disciples by the same means. Let us, then, rejoice in the occasions He presents us of suffering for Him ; as He rejoiced to do the will of His Father, which called Him to suffer for us. May we become sensible that the greatest favour He can bestow upon us, is to invite us to accompany Him to Mount Calvary. It is nothing to know Christ merely according to the flesh. How many Jews saw Him daily in Jeru-

saalem, and ate and drank with Him, and witnessed His miracles, and heard His discourses, who never became more holy; and who knowing all these things with the fullest historic assurance, having been eye witnesses of the facts, yet were left in profound blindness of heart, as to the truths connected therewith and the salvation of their souls. Let us with the beloved disciple, the type of disciples, and His mother, the type of the church; follow Him to the cross, where few even of His professing disciples had zeal enough to follow Him, and where the world was scandalised at His weakness and His sufferings. If we have indeed courage to suffer *for Him*, who suffered such unparalleled griefs *for us*, it will then be time enough to say with St. Ignatius at his martyrdom, ‘Now I have found out the road which my master trod. Now I begin to be a disciple!’ We are only Christians in proportion as we are faithful in renouncing the world. We were solemnly engaged to do so at our baptism. But we only in fact perform that engagement, when we endure with joy to be treated by the world, as that same evil world treated our Master. The friendship of the world is enmity with GOD; and he who enjoys the friendship of the world, has the most serious ground to apprehend that he has not the spirit of Him, who though without sin, was yet crucified by the world.

“ We wish to go to heaven ; let us then walk diligently in the road that leads to it. It is narrow, it is rugged, it is beset with thorns. It is impossible to enter it without violence to nature ; it is equally impossible to persevere in it, without a perpetual crucifixion of the natural man ; and without resolving, by the grace of GOD, to endure all sorts of afflictions, both from the constant contrariety of the path of grace to that of our own evil nature, and from the enmity which, from the very same cause, is felt by the children of this world against all children of GOD. Let us above all remember in the midst of our severest sufferings, that whilst we seem to be the sport of the will of the wicked ; they are in fact only the instruments, used by measure in the hand of GOD, to bring upon us that degree of suffering, which He sees it necessary for our discipline that we should endure. He stands by the furnace ; the flames may blaze, but He regulates the temperature ; He says to the fierce flames of persecution, as to the billows of affliction, ‘ Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.’ Let us then generously submit ourselves with a willing heart to His fatherly correction, for it has our true happiness for its object. And let us never forget that GOD has a sovereign right to exercise us by the heaviest trials He sees fit,—and that He has called us to, and is preparing us for, an eternal weight of glory, which so infinitely transcends them.

“Be then of good courage—be steadfast and immoveable. The more rugged the path, the more clearly may we discern the prints of the footsteps of our Saviour, who trod it before us, and the more means have we of bringing to our remembrance, that we are the disciples of Him, who was Himself made perfect through sufferings. Nay if trials even appear beyond our strength, let us not be dismayed, since He is then doubly engaged, in our weakness to become our strength, and to give us both patience to endure, and power to conquer.

“O the depths of the wisdom and goodness of God! who has not merely opened heaven to His children by the cross, but who has planted the path of every one of them with such abundant crosses, that they may be continually reminded to look at their crucified Lord and live, and to turn away from that world in which there is no trace of it. O the deceitfulness of the human heart! The natural vanity even of disciples attaches itself to our present supposed good works, as it did formerly to our sins; to our most holy exercises, as it did to our worldly accomplishments. Vanity is that taint of corruption, that pestilential breath of death, which infects every human thing! Blessed be the path of the cross, which shows us our evils, and makes us distrust that self-complacency, which destroys us.

“It is a fatal mistake to believe that we love

Christ, if we cannot quit self for Him. If a man hate not father and mother, husband and wife, nay his own life also, and take not up his cross to follow Christ, he cannot be His disciple. But what must we do to hate our own life, and to take up our cross, as the gospel commands, and without doing which we cannot be Christ's disciples? Must we flee into eremitic seclusion, must we undertake ascetic austerities? Rather let us submit with heartfelt resignation to the will of GOD manifested in his providences; from the inmost soul believing that GOD knows that which is best for us; and from our inmost spirit cheerfully and gladly submitting to, and bearing, whatever cross is laid upon us. Let us rejoice and be willing to be treated as our enemies treat us. Hatred persuades them that it is just we should suffer every sort of evil. They are delighted when they see us reduced to extreme misery. Let us be of one mind with them, though on a different ground. They believe us to be vile; if we know our own hearts we shall be convinced we are yet viler. If they deprive us of our friends, and separate us from those we love, let us thank them for the needful admonition to quit our earthly holds, to draw nearer and closer to Him who has given them to us. If they deprive us of our wealth, and strip us of our earthly possessions, and if our brethren, who should assist us, stand by unconcerned; let us willingly be



stripped of those things, which are but the garments of the old Adam, and let us more zealously put on Jesus Christ. Of what importance is it that all earthly goods should fail us, since the loss of all things in submission to the divine will, is the discipline inflicted to make us rich in heavenly treasure. Let us remember, that the poor to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs, are the poor in spirit—those who, however little they have, are fully conscious that little is far above their deserts. If then our enemies revile us, let us be fully sensible, as David was in the case of Shimei, that GOD who sees our hearts, knows we are yet worse. If we are covered with contempt, and treated by our brethren as the off-scouring of all things; let us esteem that state, which, whatever be the wickedness of our brethren in reducing us to it, GOD has appointed for us. It is safer to be little than great in the eyes of men. If they put us in the lowest place, let us gladly accept it, and stay where it pleases GOD we should be, till He Himself sees fit to take us out of it. Why should that seem so difficult to us, when we recollect that all men can do to effect our ruin, can only, if we keep under the divine hand, tend to work out our salvation; ‘For all things work together for good to those who love God.’ Many are those, who like the brethren of Joseph, strip their brother because he is more righteous than they, and send him an exile into



a foreign land, and steel their hearts against pity, though he be in destitution, and though he has been amongst them, and with the same comforts as themselves. But the end, if we are faithful, will be that we too may say to them with Joseph, '*Vos cogitastis me malum, sed Deus vertit illud in bonum.*' You had the intention to do me evil, but GOD has changed that evil into good. Nay, we may use this language much more truly than Joseph, for the good he had to rejoice in was a short lived, temporal good, under an earthly monarch, and in a transient earthly kingdom; whereas, the suffering disciples of Christ are the elect of the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible; that which they receive is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; and their kingdom is that blessed land of heavenly promise—the kingdom of heaven—of which the new Jerusalem is the capital, and the Lamb of GOD the light thereof.

“Do not, my dear sister, look back with a vain and too carnal regret at the past; nor let your mind dwell with painful retrospect on those hours, when your celebrity appeared at its height; when your house walked with GOD, and when the wise, the great, and the wealthy of this world, with one accord sat at your feet. When the ear heard you, then it blessed you; when the eye saw you, it gave witness to you. Remember that Job, was no less the servant of the Most High, when his possessions were

wrested from him, his family dispersed, and his friends traitors, than when surrounded by all this world can bestow. Nay, his adversity rather designates him as the child of GOD, than his prosperity. Hitherto we have been as babes in Christ, fed with milk; now that it behoves us to grow up as fathers and mothers in Israel, our Heavenly Father, whose love conducts us from strength to strength, until we shall each appear before Him in Zion, feeds us with strong meat. It would be vain indeed to inflict crosses upon ourselves, in the pride of our own hearts, supposing we are fit to endure them; but it is a spurious humility, to doubt that we can bear any thing, under His all powerful and sustaining hand. It is humility to distrust ourselves. It is faithlessness to doubt GOD. Let us then receive it as a token for good, that He has weaned us from the milk, to nourish our growth with strong meat. It is true this bread is very hard and very bitter; but it is enough, that it is the bread which GOD has appointed for us, and if we humbly accept it from His hand, not looking back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, we shall abundantly grow in grace and benediction. He that has most will find no grace over and above that he needs; but he that has least, shall find that he has no lack. And if we do but seek His daily blessing on the daily celestial bread of His providing, we shall in its strength, be enabled to journey the

whole forty days; that is, during the whole period of our lives, the season of our exile, till we arrive at the mount of GOD, our eternal inheritance.

“Be not cast down, if through the length of the way, and the fierce heat of persecution, your soul should at times seem as a parched land without water. If we can but suffer this privation in a spirit of self-abasement, we need not fear. Let us remember, that, spiritually as well as temporally, the Son of Man grows as a root out of a dry ground. If we do but submit to the workings of the divine hand, the land will not less be a land of GOD. He will cultivate it Himself, and will water it with a celestial, though perhaps an almost imperceptible dew. He will carefully remove the stones, and eradicate the thorns. He will render it fruitful through humiliations. He will with His own right hand plant there the true vine; and will purge it, to make it bear fruit more abundantly, by pruning off every useless branch, and raising it from the dust of the earth, to train it upon the espalier of the cross. What would become of the most promising vine, were it not cultivated, fed, pruned, and trained upwards? What would become of the most eminent saint, if the same GOD, whose gratuitous mercy planted the seed of His word in his heart, did not continually prune the too luxuriant natural branches, and train it to rest on the support of the root of Christ?

“ The labourer can hope to reap a harvest only of the same nature as the seed he has sown. Pleasures, human consolations, indulgences of sense, the satisfaction of our own wills, are the seeds of all those miseries which attain the full expansion of their deadly fruits in hell. But, on the contrary, whilst the indulgence of an evil nature yields these unhappy fruits, a spiritual submission for Christ’s sake, to crosses, to humiliations, self-denial and contradictions, are those seeds which bear their full and blessed fruits of holiness and happiness in the world to come. We shall be truly rich in eternity, if for Christ’s sake we have suffered the crucifixion of that evil nature, which is enmity to Him in this world. If we have been willing to drink of the bitter cup, and to be baptised with the baptism He was baptised with, we shall also sit at His marriage supper, and be invited to behold His glory. Nothing can be more obvious than these two truths, and nothing more universally acknowledged. Yet such is the inconsistency of man, that the wicked, whilst they confess it, still continue to sow their full measure of that seed which must necessarily produce to them so much misery ; and the children of Christ, with equal folly, whilst acknowledging the same truth, seem astonished, as though some strange thing had befallen them, when GOD subjects them to that discipline and pruning, which they allow to be the

means of a more blessed entrance into an eternal weight of glory.

“Let us blush at our own contradictions. We wish to be godly. We acknowledge that the natural mind is enmity against GOD; and yet we are astonished when the path of godliness involves a sacrifice to nature. We know that the world lieth in wickedness, that the world crucified Christ; yet we are in great astonishment, and think it very strange, when the world does not admire and honour the followers of the Master whom they persecuted to death. My dear sister, let us not deceive ourselves. Let us learn practically, what we have long acknowledged theoretically; and then we shall be quite sure that the truth which the world does not deny, oppose or pervert, is *not that truth* which will ever save us. The godliness which does not scandalize the ungodly world, and which suffers nothing from the wicked, is not that which Jesus Christ laid down his life to exhibit. On the contrary, we have reason to fear that the virtue the world admires, is a mere external human virtue; and that the esteem and peace which accompany it, will be all the recompense it will ever receive. O Lord! the world is indeed at enmity with Thee. Happy indeed are those redeemed spirits of the just made perfect, who standing before Thy throne and entered into Thy rest, enjoy Thy presence in heaven, amidst the blessed community of all the myriads of

heavenly hierarchies, who with one tongue, one heart, and one spirit, bless, and laud, and magnify Thy holy name, and enjoy the plenitude of all Thy benedictions ! but happy, too, are those, O Lord ! who, plucked by Thy mercy, as brands from the burning, enjoy communion with Thee, in the only way in which it can be enjoyed in this lower world—like a flame burning amidst thorns—like a treasure unconsumed but molten in the fierce flames of a surrounding furnace—like a traveller, who finds indeed bread and water to support his life, but who traverses an inhospitable desert where he has to fight every step of his way, in the midst of an enemy's land.

“ Shall we, O Lord, dare to say that we suffer too much—that Thou art a cruel and merciless physician, because Thou probest our wounds, to apply an efficacious remedy ? Shall we term Thee a cruel father, because Thou chastenest us after the manner of children, to render us fit for the eternal inheritance to which Thy bounty has called us ? Teach us, O Lord, to renounce all the reluctances of nature. Compel me to adopt, from necessity, that salutary discipline which the dimness of my spiritual light did not sufficiently enable me to discern as my path ; and which the feebleness of nature rendered me averse to embrace. Assist the contracted views of sense and of human reason, by the wholesome and beneficent compulsions of Thy providence ; snatch us with a strong



hand from our natural love of ease and supineness. O thou Good Physician of our mortally diseased souls! inflict upon us without being withheld by nature's agony, all the discipline and operations necessary to our cure. Place us under that regimen, which will best render us strong and robust to follow Thee in the path of the cross, to taste the sweet unction, and feed on the hidden manna, imparted to those who suffer for Thy sake; and who, feeding on that celestial food, are enabled in the midst of trials and persecutions, to keep the word of Thy patience, and to rejoice and give thanks with exceeding joy and gladness.

“We, my dear sister, love Christ because He first loved us. But we know that He loved us, because He laid down His life for us; let us then show the truth of our love to Him, by laying down our will and inclination for Him; and like Abraham, making our faith manifest by action, which is the sure test of faith. How very little is our spiritual light, whilst we complain of the injustice of mankind. Let us rather be assured that no human being can have any power over us, but what is allowed by God. A man may, according to his intention, reap to himself a blessing or a curse; but to those who suffer, if it be according to the will of God, there can be but one issue. Have we not been told that every man's work shall be tried as by fire? Why

then should we be astonished, when we are cast into the furnace? Let us rather be of good cheer, knowing that it is only where valuable metal is to be extracted, that the ore undergoes the crucible. Let us then view our persecutors no longer as enemies; but as the furnace men, charged to heap on the coal and feed the flame, whilst the Master who presides, regulates the heat and the duration of the refining process. How can we, like Job, submit to the hand of GOD, whilst we hold in abhorrence the chastening instruments He employs? Do we submit to the surgeon who pronounces amputation necessary to save life, and yet strike and revile his operator? Never let us forget that it is in truth, a secret rebellion against GOD if we hate persons, simply for being the instruments of inflicting upon us that which GOD sees it is necessary we should endure. Let us then only pray, that the Son of GOD may Himself walk with us through the fiery furnace; and that He will be pleased not to slacken His hand, till the flames have through His blessing, thoroughly wrought their work, and consumed the dross and the tin.

“ Can we, O Lord, as Thy disciples, desire a path unlike to Thine. Thou leftest the glory and adoration of angels of heaven, to sojourn amidst the corruption of earth, and the contumely and contradiction of sinners. Thy birth was amongst brute beasts;

Thy childhood passed in subjection and poverty. In Thy manhood Thou wert a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Thy enemies reviled Thee, the rulers conspired against Thee; the professedly religious cast Thee out; Thy friends forsook Thee; Thou enteredst life amidst the beasts of the field; Thou departedst from it like a malefactor nailed to the cross. GOD, Thy heavenly father, apparently abandoned Thee; the synagogue, Thy mother, crowned Thee with thorns; the world, whom Thou diedst to save, placed a reed as a sceptre of mockery and derision in Thy hand! If such was the treatment of the sinless Master, what can be expected by the sinful servants? O Lord, such as Thou art, make Thou me! Beholding Thee, may I be transformed into Thy image, and may I one day wake up in Thy perfect likeness. In the mean time, strengthen me even on this earth, in my measure, to walk in Thy path! Never let me forget, that I am the soldier of a Captain, made perfect through suffering! The member of a mystic body, whose Head was crowned with thorns, and who expired on the cross. Let me, like St. Paul, only glory in the cross of Christ, and in Him crucified. O how poor and ignoble is all the vain pomp and glory of this world, compared to the privilege of being allowed, like St. John, to draw near to our suffering Lord on Calvary, or on Mount Tabor, to hear Him speak of His decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem.

“ But why have I written you this long epistle on sufferings? Why have I given so much time, to that which ceases with time? Earthly sufferings, like earthly joys, are to a Christian but of time and for time. They equally pass away for ever, on its rapidly passing stream. Whilst I have been writing, and whilst you are reading, how many moments of suffering have hastened by, and been engulfed in the ocean of things passed away, never to return! But the bliss, the mercies, the glories of our heavenly inheritance, every moment hasten nearer; and their ineffable fruition is eternal! If joys are transient to the world, sorrows are as transient to the Christian. Let the children of light then blush to give that time and anxiety to sorrows which they shall so soon for ever leave; and let them not waste their precious time and thoughts on transient things, which they condemn in the children of the world, when given to pleasure. The root of the evil is the same in both; since in either instance, the thoughts, the interest, and the mind, are given to what is merely temporal and transitory. It is our privilege to have our conversation in heaven, and our hearts should ever be fixed on what is eternal! Never let us live below it!

“ My dear Sister, with great consideration,

“ Yours, in our common Lord,

“ ST. MARTHE.”

The recluses, meanwhile, were exposed to sufferings little less severe than the nuns. Hand-bills were posted in the corners of every street, offering rewards to those who should apprehend them. Many of the clergy did not hesitate to express their hopes of bringing them to the Bastille, or the stake.

They wandered from one hiding-place to another, with their lives in their hands. Not unfrequently the police-officers searched the very rooms in which they lay concealed. At length M. Singlin died from the extremity of suffering, and M. de Saci and M. Fontaine were seized, and put into the Bastille. Their arrest was accompanied with many circumstances of unnecessary cruelty, and during their imprisonment, they were frequently threatened with poison. How often may the just retribution of GOD be traced even in this life! The officer, who thus exceeded his commission, in unmercifully persecuting the servants of his Lord, himself died a death of torture, two months after, by the hand of his own child. This officer was M. Aubray, father to the famous, or rather infamous, poisoner, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers.

## CHAP. XI.

PACIFICATION OF CLEMENT IX.—PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.  
—ITS WIDE CELEBRITY.—SŒUR FLAVIE PASSART.—  
DOROTHÉE PERDREAU.—MADAME MONTGOBERT'S RE-  
LATION.

THIS persecution of the Port Royalists continued for some years.

Meanwhile, that part of their friends whom I have described as only occasionally retiring to Port Royal, escaped the extremity of the tempest. They were, indeed, marked as Port Royalists in the public eye, but their high rank exempted them from violence, and their eminent virtue and integrity in discharging the most important trusts, compelled universal respect and esteem. M. de Pomponne, son to M. de Andilli, and brother to the abbess of Port Royal\*, was minister of state. M. H. Arnauld was bishop of Angers; and the Duke of Liancourt was Governor of Normandy. Whole provinces were reaping the fruits of the munificence of the Duke and

\* The M. Angélique de St. Jean.



Duchess of Longueville, and the Prince and Princess of Conti. However bigoted men might be, they were too clear sighted to employ persecution against those, with whose exaltation their own interests were so immediately interwoven. Hence these, and many other personages of equal merit, still possessed considerable influence.

These excellent persons continued to cherish the warmest affection and the most profound veneration for the saints, whose piety had been instrumental in their conversion, and only waited a favourable opportunity to show the firmness of their attachment by effectually serving them.

As soon as the first fury of the storm had a little subsided, they consulted together, and resolved to unite their strength, and to exert the whole weight of their influence, to serve their friends. Madame de Longueville took upon herself to be the ostensible head of this party. All deliberations were carried on at the hôtel Longueville. Under her protection, the archbishop of Sens, the bishop of Châlons, with Arnauld and Nicole, drew up a plan of pacification. They proposed that, on their part, the signature of the formulary should be conceded, on condition that, on the part of the Pope, an explanation should be accepted. This explanation contained a full submission in matters of faith, and promised, as before, a respectful silence in matters of fact.

The duchess of Longueville wrote herself to the

Pope on the subject. Clement IX. had then just entered on his pontificate. He was a man of a pacific disposition, and had long deplored the divisions of the church. He immediately issued a brief of reconciliation. This act was termed the pacification of Clement IX. It took place in 1668.

The prison doors were immediately opened. M. Arnauld was introduced at court. The recluses returned in peace to Port Royal. The nuns were released from their long confinement. The confessors and directors were restored. Universal felicitations were made to the Port Royalists. Even the Gallican clergy and the archbishop of Paris, who had declared them rebels and heretics, joined in these congratulations. They found no difficulty, at the king's request, in proclaiming their perfect orthodoxy and sanctity. The joy of the common people was unbounded; for they had always considered the Port Royalists as saints. But what were all joys to that of the venerable directors, when they found that their flock, though so long scattered, had individually deepened in piety, and were as the three children coming out of the furnace, not only with their clothes unsinged, but loosed from the bonds with which they entered.

The period which immediately succeeded this persecution, was the brightest in the annals of Port Royal. The fame of this seclusion was extended everywhere. Its reputation both for learning and

sanctity, was firmly established, and the number of nuns and of recluses became augmented in a degree far exceeding that of any former period. Amongst the new recluses were several persons of very large fortune. Considerable sums were expended in enlarging the monastery and gardens. The Duke of Luynes and M. de Bagnols contributed immense sums in making additions to the abbey. The former of these gentlemen erected at his own expense an additional dormitory, containing seventy-two cells. The Duke of Liancourt also, and Madame de Longueville, built several new apartments. Port Royal des Champs became one of the most spacious abbeys in all France. It contained nearly two hundred nuns, besides a considerable number of ladies, who had apartments in the monastery, and whose piety induced them to wish to board there without assuming the monastic habit. The number of recluses had also very largely increased, and the celebrity of Port Royal had trebly multiplied the number of those friends who wished to be under their direction. Families of rank, affluence, and piety, who did not wish to quit their avocations in the world, built themselves country houses in the valley of Port Royal, in order to profit by the society of its pious and learned inhabitants. Amongst this class were the Duchess of Longueville, the Duke and Duchess of Luynes, and of Liancourt.

The Port Royalists might now be divided into three general classes. The nuns, who occupied the monastery, and followed the rule of Citeaux. The recluses, who led a retired life, free from all luxury or unnecessary intercourse with men, and who each served the community by following some occupation either manual or intellectual. These were bound by no vows. They, at this period, consisted of two companies. The men who lived at the farm-house belonging to Port Royal and other small cottages, and the ladies above mentioned, who boarded in apartments in the monastery. The third class was composed of the innumerable multitude of friends under their direction. Some of them, as we have just said, had country houses near Port Royal, and others only occasionally retired to board there.

The institution, long important in the eyes of the world, from the literary celebrity and acknowledged piety of its persecuted inhabitants, now began to be so, from the magnitude of its numbers, and from the immense wealth and exalted rank of a large proportion of its members. For eleven years it continued to flourish, its prosperity and usefulness increasing day by day. On every side it appeared blessing and blessed. The same GOD who had given them grace sufficient for their day in adversity now bestowed on them that double portion which is needful to stand in prosperity. Though so many rich, so many noble,

so many learned were called, Port Royal continued to exhibit a bright example of unfeigned humility and self-abasement, of self-denial, charity, daily cross bearing, and of an earnest and faithful following of a crucified Lord.

In the winter of 1670, death deprived the monastery of Port Royal des Champs of very many of its members. Amongst those who departed this life, were the Sœur St. Ann of St. Bernard of St. Barthlemi Fortier—who, always uniform in her conduct, and faithful to her duties, had spent nearly forty years in the cloister—and the two excellent Sœurs M. St. Luce Garnier, and Magdeleine de St. Opportune Roustel; the latter of whom received on her death-bed the habit of novice, which was given her in consideration of her zeal and piety. On the 2nd of May, they also lost another lay sister, called Marie Magdeleine de Charron, on whom GOD showed forth His mercy in a very particular manner. She was the last nun who quitted the house of Paris, to unite herself to her sisters of Port Royal des Champs. “She thought herself already in paradise,” said the M. Angélique de St. Jean, “when she saw herself restored to the M. Agnès, and the community. All her sentiments were one continual succession of joy, praise, and thanksgiving, for her restoration. She lived in peace, and died in humble faith.”

GOD, “who will have all men to be saved and to

come unto the knowledge of the truth," but who leaves the impenitent to their natural hardness of heart, cited, at the same time, before His tribunal, the Sœur Flavie Passart, so famous for her intrigues and her treachery.

As soon as the M. Agnès heard that she was dangerously ill, she was deeply touched with the state of this wretched person; she seemed as though her heart had forgotten all the years of her duplicity, treachery, and enmity: and that it only retained a recollection of her, as when, abandoned and destitute, she in her childhood, cast herself on the charity of the Mère Angélique. Having heard that she was in imminent danger, and that she was friendless in the midst of the community she had taken such pains to disunite from Port Royal, the M. Agnès sat down and wrote to this most unworthy daughter, a heart affecting letter. It was expressed with all the affection of a spiritual mother; but also with the faithfulness of one who feels the value of the immortal soul, and who bears in mind, that the person receiving it, may soon be called into the presence of GOD.

The following circumstances gave occasion to this letter:—M. Desseaux, a man of deep piety, who had lived for forty years a retired life at Champ Garnier, a farm belonging to Port Royal; and who had a sister who was a nun there, was nephew to S. Flavie. Having heard that his aunt was very ill, he went



over to Paris, to inquire after her. Being informed that she was at the last extremity, he charged the nun at the turn, who was his cousin, to go to the Sœur Flavie, and to tell her, he was come to inquire after her health, both on his account and on that of the nuns of Port Royal, who were always anxious concerning her welfare. The nun having executed her commission, returned, and brought word from the sick nun, that she deeply felt his kindness in taking the trouble of coming; and earnestly recommended herself to his prayers, and to those of the nuns of Port Royal des Champs. M. Desseaux was about to take his leave when he was again summoned by one of the nuns of the turn, and told there was yet a word more she wished to say. Being again seated in the parlour, the same nun, his cousin, who had before spoken to him, after having carefully shut the door, asked him\* if he was quite alone? M. Desseaux having answered that he was, she caused another nun to draw near, and then told him, she was expressly charged by the Sœur Flavie to express to him the most lively gratitude for the charity of the nuns of Port Royal; and that not only for their present inquiries, but especially for all the numberless obligations for which she was indebted to them; and that she charged the nun, above all, to

\* It must be remembered, that the monastic grate divided them, and that the curtains were probably drawn.

say, that being now in the immediate prospect of eternity, she threw herself in spirit at their feet, and most unfeignedly besought their forgiveness, and earnestly entreated them to forget the past. But these nuns at the same time, represented the duration under which they found themselves enthralled, and required M. Desseaux to give them his assurance of the most inviolable secrecy. M. Desseaux accordingly returned to Port Royal des Champs, and executed his commission. That community, deeply affected by the state of their former sister, and by the message she had sent, considered how they might devise some means of making known to her, that they accepted her message in good part, and heartily forgave her, hoping GOD would do the same. On this account, the M. Agnès, wrote the above mentioned letter; the nuns thinking nothing could prove more consolatory to her, on account of the strict intimacy which had formerly subsisted between them. The epistle was written in great haste, because M. Desseaux had reported the physician to have pronounced, that in all probability, the Sœur Flavie had not twenty-four hours to live. The Mère Agnès, wishing both to comfort the Sœur Flavie, and also to maintain the strictest secrecy as to what had passed—that she might neither betray the intermediate nuns, nor expose the dying penitent to ill-treatment—purposely avoided any reference to the message

she had received; and contented herself with only expressing the strong and continued affection of the nuns of Port Royal; assuring her of their entire forgetfulness of the past, but beseeching her, if anything pressed upon her own conscience, to look to GOD through the merits of Christ, who was abundant in mercy, and whose precious blood could cleanse from all sin. No more was heard on the subject for a whole month, at the expiration of which time, a long letter was delivered to the M. Agnès bearing the signature of Sœur Flavie; but neither expressed in her style, which was peculiar, nor written in her hand. This epistle after many common place observations, termed the nuns of Port Royal, disobedient, rebellious, &c. and added, that her greatest consolation was the recollection of her own conduct at Port Royal. The letter was a long one; but whilst the nuns of Port Royal des Champs were occupied in imagining whence it originated, they received intelligence of the death of the Sœur Flavie; which must have taken place in less than a week after the date of the letter. The mystery of this epistle was never unravelled. Whether she in truth repented or not—whether as a sincere penitent, she found acceptance with GOD, who can even snatch a brand from the burning; or whether she passed the irrevocable gulf steeped in unrepented guilt and in the spirit of spiritual slumber, it is not for us to decide. No one

appeared to have pity on her soul, but the nuns of Port Royal, whom she had so basely betrayed; and the archbishop of Paris strictly forbade that any particulars of her death should either be inquired into, or mentioned.

Though it did not occur till very many years after, this may not be an inappropriate occasion to introduce the account of the closing scene of her tool and companion in error. It was not until the beginning of the year 1685, that GOD cited to his tribunal the Sœur Dorothee Perdreau. She had maintained, for many years, her usurped seat of abbess of Port Royal de Paris, a possession undisturbed indeed by men, but unblessed by God. The remorse, which first occasionally seemed to rouse her from her lethargy, gradually became more acute and harrowing, and gave her perpetual pain, leaving its deep traces on her harassed, anxious, and troubled countenance. Truly there is no peace to the wicked. At length, unable to bear her torment, she earnestly, and at all hazards, besought permission to see some of her former friends, and to pour out her heart to them; but this she never could obtain. The false counsellors who had urged her to the steps she had taken, would never permit her to retrace them. In vain did they try to calm her acute anguish. Often did she exclaim, in the bitterness of her heart, "I have once been at Port Royal, and once drank of its

spirit! I know, better than you can, the scandal and infamy of my usurping from ambition the charge which so holy a nun as the Mère Angélique Arnauld renounced from humility!" Nor was this her only grief: sorrow, distress, harassment, and vexation, tormented her on all sides. The Sœur Flavie, a person far her superior in talent and intrigue, and who had begun her schemes solely with a view to be abbess herself, was her most unrelenting enemy. In public she treated her with the most cutting contempt and ridicule: secretly, she formed never-ending intrigues and cabals against her, and sought in every way to thwart and contradict her. In vain did the Sœur Dorothee, in sincere repentance, earnestly desire to do the best she could to establish the ancient discipline of Port Royal, in her own usurped monastery. The five or six nuns of Port Royal, who had been persuaded to join her by the sophistry of false teachers, no longer paid her the obedience they had formerly yielded to their superiors. She soon found — what will ever be experienced by unfaithful spiritual guides — that it is much more easy to maintain a perfectly strict religious discipline, than to enforce a relaxed one; because a sacrifice of natural will must take place in either case; and the human heart will far sooner make that sacrifice when what is required is truly according to the full dictate of conscience, and under

the advice of a person we know to be faithful, than when the sacrifice falls short of that which is truly the will of GOD, and is proposed, for form's sake, by a person we know to be unfaithful. In short, it is easier to make a complete sacrifice, that will fully satisfy conscience, than a half sacrifice which falls short of it. Hence in every church, and in every religious institution, any relaxation is but the prelude to a complete and entire fall. Hence, finding it impossible to govern those who knew her to be unfaithful, she was compelled to yield one point after another, in the hope of bribing them to preserve even a poor outward show of respect. Her spiritual directors added still more to her affliction. They ruled her with a rod of iron; and continually stopped her mouth with the most haughty insolence, whenever she deplored to them, which she often did with bitter tears, the relaxation of her house. The fact was, that the evil counsellors who had separated Port Royal de Paris, from Port Royal des Champs, felt their honour interested in the flourishing state of the former. But as only the two Sœurs Dorothée and Flavie, and six more out of the whole number of one hundred and eighty Port Royal nuns, were the fruit of their sophistry and cajolery, and of the threats and incarceration of years; and as no person of any piety would join their iniquitous institution, they found themselves in a most embarrassing situa-



tion. The total incapacity of the Sœur Dorothée, and the indulgences they were obliged to connive at to maintain their usurpations, together with the festivals they gave to propitiate the public, had occasioned the most entire disorganisation of their temporal affairs: so that although they had wrested from Port Royal des Champs the magnificent house and establishment of Port Royal de Paris, and though they had iniquitously deprived the hundred and eighteen inhabitants of Port Royal des Champs of nearly two thirds of its revenues for the house at Paris, which only contained eight lapsed Port Royal nuns, yet they saw themselves on the eve of a scandalous bankruptcy. Their poverty and distress, as well as their relaxed discipline and extravagance, were talked of at every *petit souper* of Paris; and they saw this institution which so much sophistry, fraud and oppression, had been employed to secure, converted into a mere engine for holding them up to the contempt and derision of all catholic Christendom. In order then to do away this imputation, these evil directors had it at heart above all things, to increase the number of the nuns; but as no religious persons would join them, the directors obliged the abbess to relax the rules in every point, in order to open the door to the multitudes, whom want of fortune to establish themselves in the world, reduced to the necessity of accepting an asylum. Yet even this

means did not succeed ; the ten or twelve who came, were sufficient to render utterly hopeless any attempt at reformation, whilst they were far too few to give the monastery reputation in the eyes of the world ; a result which embittered the spiritual directors still more against the unfortunate abbess, who had been their tool. On her they now threw all the blame, instead of taking it upon themselves, to whom it was chiefly due. They had indeed raised her to the abbacy, almost solely on account of her incapacity, hoping to find in her an easy tool ; but they now discovered that her very incapacity effectually neutralised the strenuous exertion which might otherwise have retrieved affairs. The Sœur Dorothée, meanwhile very different from the ambitious Flavie Passart, truly deplored the state of the house, mourning over its lamentable fall, and the sad change that had passed upon it since its separation. She reproached her directors continually, with having imposed on her the burthen of governing others ; and declared again and again, with tears, that she never would have undertaken it, but from the fear lest the house should be dissolved and lost. She added, with the most poignant expressions of sorrow, that they must be alone responsible for all the evil ; that they well knew it was solely their threats, and her timidity, and want of courage, to bear like her mothers and sisters the privations of

sacraments, and the fulminations of excommunication, which had prevented her from following those she had ever venerated; and whose seat they had forced her, against her will, and against her conscience, to usurp. Two or three of the nuns of the ancient stamp, having joined with her, and having bitterly bewailed the relaxed state of the monastery to a priest — who sometimes officiated there, and who was the only spiritual preacher they had — the young relaxed ones complained to the director, and had him silenced. Those who had placed her in office, were ever upbraiding her with having accepted it, and with her incapacity, which she was also continually reminded of, in the most disrespectful terms, by her nuns. Such was the state of this unhappy abbess. Everything showed her deep distress of mind. Having at one time heard of a pious Benedictine, she wrote to him, begging him to come, for the urgent spiritual relief of one of her nuns. He instantly went there, arriving at seven in the morning, when the abbess herself came to him, and with tears, and in the greatest distress, spoke of her own wretched situation, of the relaxation of her monastery, and of the great pain and remorse she felt at having been terrified into compliance, by bad advisers. She spoke till twelve o'clock at noon, and in the greatest anguish and compunction. In vain did she fast, and pray; the relaxation of her monastery, her own

usurpation, the unjust wresting of the house of Port Royal, and the state of its revenues, lay heavy on her heart. Well did she know, it could not have the blessing of GOD. The Benedictine expressed his satisfaction at her deep compunction; "truly," he said, "these at least are precious remains." "Ah," said the miserable abbess, "our best moments are but an empty shadow of what we learnt once at Port Royal! there, there, at that blessed house — which we fools have miserably betrayed — there indeed, you will see the substance itself!" Very soon after, the news arrived that the Mère Dorothee Perdreau had departed this life, on the 4th of January, 1685. But the particulars of her death were carefully hushed up.

Soon after, however, a most extraordinary story was covertly circulated, — so marvellous indeed as almost to be beyond belief; and yet so awful, and so characteristic, that many thought, it at least showed, that GOD can punish by the operations of an evil conscience, and a troubled imagination, without the intervention of any external circumstances. The story was again hushed up; yet a sort of mystery was preserved, which prevented it from being utterly disbelieved. But the circumstance was, a few weeks after, authenticated from Port Royal de Paris itself. M. de Mongobert, widow of the Marquis of Mongobert of the house of Joyeuse, having one day paid a visit to

M. de la Grange, a nun at Port Royal de Paris, she asked her whether the story which was current about the death of the abbess Dorothee Perdreau, was true. M. de la Grange said, "I cannot take upon me to say what particulars may have been related to you; but nothing is more certainly true than the mysterious circumstances with which it was accompanied. We can trust you, and every particular we are about to tell you, you may assuredly rely upon." She then called another nun, and said to her: "My sister, draw near; we may open our minds to this lady, and speak to her in full confidence. Do let us unburden our hearts, and confide to her what has passed." The nuns then described the dreadful remorse and perturbation of mind experienced by the Sœur Dorothee; and not by her only, but by some of the unfaithful nuns of Port Royal, her companions in guilt. They macerated their flesh, performed long and rigorous fasts, the most austere penances, and long watches, but in vain; it seemed as if they found no peace. One evening before the 29th of December, all the other nuns having retired to bed, it was the turn of two of the former Port Royal nuns, to perform the nightly watch at the perpetual adoration of the Holy Sacrament. The nuns they relieved had retired, and they knelt down alone in the church — that church, whose walls had heard their early vows; in which the Mère Angélique, who had received

them to profession, the *Mère des Anges*, and so many of the worthies of Port Royal, whose memories they had disgraced, were buried. A solitary lamp burnt steadily, but dimly, over the altar before which they knelt with awe, endeavouring to fix their heart in deep penitence on Him whose sacrifice is perpetuated upon it. And as they thought on Him, whose precious blood was shed for sin, they experienced a measure of comfort and deep self-abasement. The night was long and dark; they were both advanced in years; they had fasted long and severely; and the watch was to be kept throughout the dreary hours of the night. They prayed, till mental prayer succeeded to vocal; and at length, distinct thought became, as it were, absorbed in silence before the realised presence of GOD. When suddenly, they saw, as it were, a shadow rise from the tomb of the *Mère Angélique*, which was just without the grate, separating the nuns' choir from the nave of the church; and as they looked, the shade assumed her semblance. It was evidently her countenance, but the icy gravity of death, and of stern reproof, sat upon it. In her shadowy hand, was the abbess's crosier. On it came with a solemn majestic bearing, beyond that of living mortals, from the dark recesses in the opposite depths of the church.—The grate stopped it not.—It entered the choir with a noiseless, solemn step. The two nuns were trans-



fixed with awe, and horrible fear. Their flesh crept, as the spectre approached. It stopped after having passed the whole length of the choir and seated itself in the abbess's stall. When the apparition, after being seated elevated the crosier, a second shadowy form, resembling the Sœur Dorothée, entered by an opposite door, on whom the apparition fixed its glazed eyes, and sternly said, "Sœur Dorothée! Sœur Dorothée! I summon you to appear before the tribunal of God, to give up your account!" The accent was awful and chilling. And as the spectre fixed its eyes upon the usurping abbess, it seemed as though she was irresistibly drawn towards it by a deadly fascination; and when she was about to prostrate herself at the footstool of the spectre, the whole instantly vanished.

The fearful spell being broken, the nuns rushed out of the church, and ran to the abbess Dorothée, to whom they related all that they had seen. She was seized with the most violent terror, and exclaimed, "O my God! my God! I shall die immediately," and a few days after, she expired.\*

\* The singularity of this relation seems to demand a more particular reference, see *Lettre de Du Fossé* at the end of *Du Fossé's Mémoires*, pp. 515—517. Also *Dom Clemencet*, tom. 8. pp. 99. Also *Gilbert's Mémoires*, tom. 3. pp. 6—8. Also *Lettres Edifiantes*. Likewise see the death of *l'Abbesse intruse Dorothée Perdreau*, in the general histories of Port Royal. *Clemencet*, *Gilbert*, &c. &c.

Such was the relation of Madame la Grange to Madame de Montgobert. Whatever might be their opinion of this singular narration, at the present day it will probably receive but one interpretation. It is indeed an awful intimation that a righteous GOD needs no extraordinary outward chastisements to punish the guilty; and that the terrors of an evil conscience, and of a troubled imagination, may prove as efficient instruments of punishment in His retributive justice as the most severe temporal scourge.

## CHAP. XII.

DEATH OF MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE. — VIOLENT PERSECUTION. — RECLUSES EXILED. — M. DE SACI. — M. ANGÉLIQUE DE ST. JEAN. — BEAUTIFUL LETTERS OF M. ST. MARTHE, AND L'ABBÉ BOILEAU.

FOR the short space of eleven years, the community of Port Royal des Champs shone forth, a brilliant example of almost every gift of nature and of grace.

At the end of this period, Madame de Longueville died. Her death took place in 1679. It then clearly appeared what had been the real motive for suspending the persecution. The king's respect for so near a relative was the true cause of the Port Royalists being so long unmolested. She had scarcely been dead one month, before the Jesuits openly began to renew their hostilities.

The storm now burst upon them which finally overwhelmed this community of saints. All the recluses received an order from government finally and instantly to quit Port Royal. Most of them died in poverty and exile, but rich in faith and in good works.

A lingering, but cruel persecution was instituted against the nuns, who were now deprived of their protectors. They were first interdicted from receiving either scholars or novices. This alone would have insured the termination of the establishment. But their enemies were not content with waiting for what might be called its natural death. They had found pretexts for wresting from them the house of Port Royal de Paris and half their revenues, but although thus unjustly deprived of their property, their charity did not fail. They had formerly maintained four medical men on purpose to attend the poor; their funds being now inadequate to meet this expense, they learned to dress their wounds themselves; and as they had formerly poured forth their charities out of their abundance, they now denied themselves to continue them in their poverty. They have frequently been known with a cheerful countenance, to make a liberal donation, when, at the same time, they had not wherewith to purchase food for the next meal.

Meanwhile, although their temporal sorrows followed each other in rapid succession, and temporal losses assailed them on every side, yet their faith was not suffered to fail. Their spiritual riches seemed rather to increase, and the daily trimmed lamps of these truly wise virgins to shine the brighter, and to give forth a light more pure, as the quickly closing

night of adversity blackened around them. Very many of the recluses and spiritual guides, who though removed to distant exiles, had still carried on an occasional intercourse by letter with Port Royal, were now called from poverty and exile on earth, to the presence of their Divine Master they had so long and so faithfully served. There is scarcely one of their number whose life would not furnish a religious or literary biographer with a highly interesting subject; but the limits of this work must prevent our entering on a theme to which justice could not be done, unless the voluminous materials which exist were given without abridgment. We will not, however, refuse our readers a brief sketch of the death and funeral of M. de Saci\*: because the account is most edifying and affecting, and not very long; because he was one of the most distinguished directors of Port Royal, and of the most eminent of scripture commentators; and also because, as the justly celebrated translator

\* LOUIS ISAAC LE MAITRE DE SACI, was youngest brother to M. le Maitre; and like him, a recluse at Port Royal. He entered priest's orders, and was for many years its director. He was eminently pious, even from his youth up. His translation of the Bible is by many persons esteemed the best version of the scriptures extant, not excepting our own. The text is that used by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is accompanied by a commentary, which appears to have been highly useful to many of our most celebrated commentators, amongst whom we may specially mention Gill, and Henry. It was chiefly written in the Bastille, in company with Du Fossé.

of the Scriptures, he is well known to the British public. To which it may be added, that this little sketch—the substance of which is taken from Fontaine, his pupil, his secretary, and his faithful friend and companion during his long imprisonment in the Bastille—presents a striking view of the spirit and manners of Port Royal.

FONTAINE'S ACCOUNT OF THE LAST DAYS, ILLNESS,  
AND TRIUMPHANT DEATH OF M. DE SACI.

M. DE SACI took up his abode entirely at Port Royal des Champs, about three or four years after his liberation from the Bastille. I had apartments at first in the neighbourhood of Paris, and afterwards at St. Mandé, for the convenience of going backwards and forwards, to superintend the publication of his Bible. It was painful to me to be in any degree separated from my dear and revered guide and master, to whom I had devoted myself even from my childhood upwards; who had been the guide of my boyhood, the faithful spiritual director of my manhood, the master in whose service I was employed, and whom I had the favour to be permitted to remain with, during his long imprisonment. Nevertheless, though I had seldom, if ever before, been separated from him, I cheerfully took up my abode there, that I might the more assiduously and effectually promote his business, and the sooner return to



my beloved seclusion. I therefore spent the whole of the winter of 1678 at St. Mandé, continually hoping that each month, as it rolled by, would bring my labours to a conclusion; and refreshing myself with the prospect of then immediately returning to my dear master, and offering myself to serve him for life, in any office in which it should please him to employ me.

A few weeks however after Easter, I received a letter from M. de Saci, desiring me to come over to him to Port Royal des Champs without delay. I joyfully received the summons, imagining that M. de Saci was about to anticipate the proposal I had so long cherished, and I instantly resolved to give up every prospect of pecuniary emolument, and go.

I cannot describe the delight with which I caught the first glimpse of the top of the spire of Port Royal, as I drew near to the brow of the steep wooded descent that overhangs the monastery. GOD (thought I) has, in loving kindness and mercy, granted all the ardent desires so long cherished in the secret of my heart. Yes, in this beloved valley shall I find my home; to my dear and honoured master shall I devote the rest of a life he first was the means of dedicating to GOD! in this spot, hallowed by so many saints, shall I end my days. I shall sleep at the feet of him, who first taught me to know the value of the precious blood of Christ; my dust shall rest in peace,

amongst the dust of His saints. Oh, with what fullness of joy did I once again enter the well-known church, and, throwing myself prostrate, bless GOD, and offer myself to Him, to do with me what seemed to Him good. But oh, how little do we often know what we pray for! GOD did indeed hear my prayer, and answer it—yea, answered it in abundant mercy, yet far differently from what I expected.

As soon as I entered M. de Saci's study, he arose and tenderly and closely embraced me, with an expression of emotion which he was not wont to betray; and which his habitual calmness and tranquillity rendered very unusual. At length I had courage to make my proposal; but what was my astonishment, when he replied in evident surprise, "How? is it possible you do not know that M. de Harley, the archbishop of Paris, was here yesterday (May 17, 1679), and has given notice to every one of us, to retire from hence for ever, within a week?" The tears came into my eyes, but I could not answer, so totally unexpected was this blow.

Having however obtained a comfortable sum, by copying manuscripts, and by my employment as a professor in the Port Royal schools, I now blessed GOD, who had thus put it into my power to ask the dear and revered master, to whom all my life I had been so deeply indebted, to do me the favour to come and reside with me at St. Mandé, and to repose his

declining years with one who so deeply owed him a pupil's reverence, and more than a child's affection. Yet I had not courage at once to make this request to one so very greatly my superior, and to whom I owed such continual obligation. My dear master seeing my distress, said, "Yes, my dear friend, so it is! we have often blessed GOD for having made us the means of usefulness to others; let us now bless Him, for managing for us a retreat, which by His grace may be so useful to ourselves. Alas! how much do even the most holy and best of servants stand in need of purification. How much more do we. Our spiritual fathers, M. de St. Cyran, M. de Singlin, M. Rebours, M. Dumont, all saints, all chosen faithful servants; yet, after they had served their long and arduous day, had each of them the favour to have a way opened to them (for favour it was, though opened by persecution) to prepare themselves in their latter days, for their entrance into the immediate presence of GOD. It was the voice of the Lord, though speaking through the mouths of their enemies; yet speaking in tender mercy, for their good. Surely then if *they* reaped that blessing, and found it to be so, when uttered by an enemy who had no legitimate authority; how shall we not listen to Him more willingly, when He speaks to us by the mouth of our ecclesiastical superior?" He added much more, which my emotion prevented me from

distinctly remembering. But as he spoke, my soul became tranquillised, and returned to its rest. When he ceased, I besought him to do me the honor to come and dwell with me at St. Mandé. I told him that I had taken a large house there, to which was attached a neat and commodious chapel; and that I had beguiled the hours of my long separation from Port Royal, by furnishing it in a plain, but commodious manner, on purpose to have it in my power to receive there, any of my dear fathers in Christ, should either business require their temporary residence in the proximity of Paris, or should any new persecution arise, to scatter them from their beloved seclusion. I warmly urged my suit, and, I observed with inexpressible joy, that his choice would have been to comply; but he was afterwards so strongly urged to fix his abode at Pomponne\*, that he could not refuse, either consistently with propriety to so near a relation as M. de Pomponne, or with a due regard for what might yet be done, through his medium, to delay the final extinction of Port Royal. He retired then to Pomponne, where I often visited him, and where he lived in a small cottage in entire seclusion. M. de Luzanci, the brother of the Mère Angélique de St. Jean (and like myself his pupil and friend),

\* The estate of M. de Pomponne, brother to the abbess Angélique de St. Jean, first cousin to M. de Saci, and first minister of state to Louis XIV.

shared his retreat. His time was chiefly spent in prayer, and in writing. Many of his most valuable works were either composed or revised<sup>d</sup> in this solitude. M. de Luzanci, whose modesty withheld him from undertaking works of his own, assisted in transcribing, and superintended the printing and publication. How nothing is lost which is done in obedience to the will of GOD, who can pour an equal blessing either on social or solitary duties !

When M. de Saci's path was appointed by GOD at Port Royal, he shone as a light amidst those bright luminaries. Numbers of the rising generation educated in their schools — of recluses retired at les Granges — of holy nuns — and of the friends of Port Royal, looked to him for direction ; and all those persons, holy, enlightened and influential as they were, would have exerted every nerve to prevent M. de Saci's banishment ; for they considered his imprisonment in the Bastille, and his exile at Pomponne, as the greatest blow that vital religion could receive. Yet how different are the ways of GOD to ours ! It is to that very imprisonment in the Bastille, we are indebted for his invaluable translation \* and comment on the Bible. To his exile we likewise owe many of his spiritual letters, and the

\* This is the French translation circulated by the Bible Society ; it has been generally esteemed the best extant, and that not excepting our own excellent one.

most excellent of his works. That voice with which he spake amidst his disciples in the days of his publicity, is passed away with them from the earth; whereas it is from the very entombment of that exile which they most apprehended that his usefulness has acquired permanence, and that he is enabled to make that voice of wisdom and of evangelical truth still heard, amidst the remoteness of distant centuries.

M. de Saci, having received a handsome annuity from the Duchess of Longueville, disposed of a considerable part of it in forming a library, with a view to lend books to those destitute of the means of procuring them. The remainder he spent in buying and distributing books to poor, but devoted ecclesiastics. The last time I saw him, he was then at the advanced age of seventy-one years, he requested me to select from his library all the books I might like to have, as he intended leaving it to M. du Fossé; but wished in the mean time to make me a present of some of the books he had himself used, and which he meant afterwards to replace.

For four years M. de Saci continued in this retirement, daily increasing in piety and humility. In the summer of 1683 he was seized with an attack of fever, of so violent a character, that his life was despaired of.

When his illness was known, all his friends flocked



from every quarter once more to see him. But as there were such multitudes to whom his labours had been useful, who were all equally anxious to see their spiritual Father, the physicians found it necessary to issue an order to admit no one. I was amongst the number of those who came. I had imagined that my long attachment of forty years; my having been with him almost from my boyhood, as a servant, a son, and a friend; and my having nursed him in similar illnesses, during his imprisonment, would have excepted me. But he was not in a state to be consulted, and the friends then about him knew not Port Royal, nor our relations to each other. They meant to be faithful, and I too was consequently excluded, in common with the rest of his devoted friends. This did indeed cut me to the heart. Often when I considered the disparity of our years, had I, though with deep pain, contemplated his death: but I thought, that I, his pupil, and in affection his child, should at least have the consolation of nursing him in his sickness, and of closing my honoured father's eyes. This then was an unexpected stroke. I mention it, because I have ever found, that when GOD sees fit to try us, He appoints those circumstances in our trials which shall really answer the purpose He intended, namely, of probing our hearts, and proving of a truth what manner of spirit we are actually of. Nor have I found, in the course

of a long life, that seeking to bear trials, by endeavouring to anticipate their circumstances, ever availed me; or could be a substitute for a heart truly dedicated to the will of God, and, from a genuine love to Him, plastic to any circumstances He may see good to bring us. My feelings during this period I cannot describe. Of this however I felt sure, that so heavy a chastisement would not have been inflicted, but to produce an equally important blessing. My apprehensions proved groundless; the fever was assuaged. And as soon as my dear master was better, he wrote me a most kind letter, which quite consoled me for my disappointment; and requested me to come, and spend a few days with him immediately. I did so, and the kind manner in which he received me, will never be effaced from my memory. How little did I then think, he had but one single week to live!

On entering the room, my saint-like master came forward with an affectionate smile to embrace me. I threw myself at his feet, where I had never thought to have prostrated myself again, and clasped his knees, to implore a benediction, but tears choked my utterance. We both wept, and he held me long in his arms, exclaiming, as Paul to Timothy, "My son in the gospel of Christ, and in faithful and dutiful affection, my son!"

On looking back to this visit, so near the conclu-

sion of his life, I voluntarily thought, that in some measure he might be said to copy his Divine Master, who having loved His own, loved them to the end. M. de Saci said he was deeply grieved they had in his illness kept him from one so particularly his own. This sentence at once seemed to overpay all I had felt. In this last visit it was so delightful to see him once more, that I can scarcely remember distinctly what passed ; though I shall never forget the sweet and holy impression.

And now I must enter upon the painful recital of his death, at which I was not present.

A few days before that event, a general jubilee took place ; as though GOD would open to his servant all the treasures of His grace on earth, before He took him to behold His glory in heaven. The jubilee concluded on the last day of 1683, and M. de Saci expired on the 4th of January, 1684. The day preceding he had, as usual, performed the daily service in the domestic chapel. On that occasion he entered into it, not merely with his usual deep devotion and recollection, but with such uncommon expression of earnest fervour, that a person present, whilst he repeated the “ Domine, non sum dignus ” and the “ Agnus Dei,” said that his very countenance seemed to beam with light, and joy, and peace.

Like Stephen, he was looking upwards steadfastly to heaven, beholding Jesus at the right hand of GOD ;

and, like him, his face shone as an angel's, with the reflected glory. He seemed as though he saw Him whom he addressed, face to face. Yet whilst his spirit was filled with this divine fervour, his soul was in truth expanding her angel wings, to rise and meet her GOD. The weather was intensely cold; and at the conclusion of the service, no sooner had he passed the threshold of the chapel, than he fainted. It was a considerable time before he could be restored. At twelve o'clock, which was the dinner-hour, he however sufficiently recovered to take his usual seat at table. He at first indeed appeared very feeble, but he gradually revived, and before the meal was concluded, appeared as well as he had usually been, since his recovery from the severe fever before mentioned. An hour after dinner he began, or more correctly speaking he seemed to be drawn out unpremeditatedly into a spiritual discourse, which gradually became more and more animated; so that it seemed to the whole family, who were still sitting round the fire-side, (as was their custom after dinner,) as though the whole fountains of his heart and soul were broken up, and poured in one full tide of deep and holy inspiration and heavenly eloquence. He had begun on the subject of the office of the day, concerning which some question had been addressed to him; but he soon turned to that of the unsearchable riches and treasures of Christ—a subject always inexhaustible

to him; but on this ever memorable occasion, he appeared to be animated with an almost supernatural impulse. It seemed as though a view of heavenly glory opened to his soul, and while he was almost overpowered with holy awe, his heart was evidently full to overflowing with zeal and love. His countenance became illumined, like that of a seraph, and an awful and divinely majestic eloquence flowed from his lips, which penetrated and melted every heart. Did some secret presentiment thus carry him almost beyond the limit of mortal bounds? Do the souls of the saints of GOD, thus on the confines of this nether world, inhale a heavenly air, and behold a ray of glory from heaven's opening gates that we cannot yet discern? Do they hear a voice from the heavenly Jerusalem they are entering we cannot hear? However this may be, it is certain, that for two whole hours he held every heart enrapt, every ear fixed, and every soul entranced, by these, the last words he was ever, as a minister, to pronounce amongst men. On concluding, he arose and quitted the room, leaving his audience as it were spell-bound and overpowered by the sensations he had excited. A deep silence of many minutes ensued. No one seemed willing to desecrate the sacred impression, by breaking the silence with any common speech. Till at length, Madame Hyppolyte, who kept M. de Saci's house—in a tone of deep emotion—uttered these few words,

“Believe me, every one of you who hear me; such a voice as we have now heard is never uttered amongst men, but from the lips of one on the verge of heavenly glory.”

Scarcely had she spoken the words, when she was suddenly summoned to M. de Saci, who had again swooned, and the man of God was gently laid upon that bed, from which he never again rose. His fever rekindled with redoubled violence. That night—so eventful to Port Royal—was spent in trying every remedy which the affection and skill of his friends and physicians could devise. But the malignity of the disease baffled every effort. M. de Saci, who felt that the hour was come when his earthly exile was drawing to its close, requested to partake of the sacrament. And with eyes sparkling—not so much with the excitement of fever as with the supernatural fire of divine grace and love—he administered it to himself. Then, in a most heart-affecting prayer, he fervently recommended his friends, his disciples and spiritual children, to GOD. All the nuns of Port Royal, and all the recluses, were mentioned by name. And amongst them, I was told, he most kindly mentioned me. Then composedly lying down, he prepared for death. Tears of love, and gratitude, and humility, flowed from his eyes, at the thoughts of his own vileness, and at the greatness of the redemption of Christ, and the inestimable price of His



precious blood, at which it was procured. It seemed as though this excellent pastor, who in all things sought to follow his blessed Master's steps in life, was also to follow them in his disappearance from among men. And as Jesus was parted from His disciples in the act of blessing them, so did this His servant finish his work and his glorious and eventful course, in the very act of praying a benediction upon his spiritual children.

All M. de Saci's friends were thunderstruck at this sudden and unexpected bereavement, which seemed no less a death-blow to the cause of Port Royal, than a loss to friendship and religion. But to no one, perhaps, was the shock so great, as to myself, who had seen him only eight days before in perfect health. There was not one amongst his numerous flock who did not long to go instantly to Pomponne, once more to behold him dead, at whose feet they had so long sat as disciples, while he was living. But prudence peremptorily forbade this last testimony of affection. We all knew that the least symptom of such an intention would have immediately sealed the ruin of Port Royal, and occasioned the rigorous imprisonment of all its friends.

M. de Saci had intimated in his will, that he desired to be interred at Port Royal des Champs, that his body might rest amongst those to whom he had for so many years filled the office of director,

and amongst whom his heart had ever dwelt. It was impossible to avoid passing through Paris, in translating the body from Pomponne to Port Royal, and the greatest fears were entertained, both by those well informed of the disposition of the court, as well as by the abbess and the nuns, that it would be stopped by the officers of police, were it discovered. Many ladies of distinction, especially the duchess of Lesdiguières, had wished to give M. de Saci a testimonial of her respect, by sending a procession with torches to meet the funeral at the gate of St. Antoine, and to accompany it through the city to the church of St. Jacques du Haut-pas; for the corpse was to be privately deposited there for the night, in order to proceed next day to Port Royal des Champs, which is distant eighteen miles from Paris.

Those however who had the management of the transaction, found it indispensable to avoid all publicity, since it was more than rumoured that the police were about to issue orders, not to suffer the body to pass. It was on this account brought with the utmost secrecy to St. Jacques. No information was afforded but to immediate friends; and this great and good man—who had been the means of supplying catholic Christendom with the scriptures, and of effecting the conversion of so many thousands—whose eloquence, whose piety, whose learning, whose

singular wisdom, meekness, and gentleness had raised him to such eminence, and whose praise was in all the churches of Europe—would have been refused a sepulture by the very city which had been most eminently blessed by being the scene of his labours, had not the zeal and courage of a few faithful friends eluded the watchful malice of his persecutors. The body was transported in the dusk of evening, and was privately deposited in St. Jacques; whilst his friends—some of the most eminent men then in the world, for piety, learning, and rank—were reduced to the necessity of assembling in various disguises, and skulking through by-streets, to the church where they had undertaken to watch throughout the night, to prevent violence being offered to his remains; and promising themselves the consolation of accompanying them to the grave on the following day. They were, however, scarcely assembled in sad and solemn silence around the coffin, when tidings reached them, that the vague rumours in circulation, and the fears of the abbess, were but too well founded. They discovered that, even the death of its victim had not put a stop to the spirit of persecution; and that neither the spiritual bond, nor the close ties of consanguinity which subsisted between M. de Saci and the house of Port Royal, would prove any protection against the cruel violence of their adversaries. The court party were resolved on

preventing that monastery from receiving the sacred deposit which they so earnestly and affectionately desired, ever to keep amongst them, as a consolation to their grief, and as a stimulus to their faith. Information was received, that it was resolved to arrest the body, and that messengers had been sent to Pomponne, to discover if the suspected translation was intended. GOD however foiled the attempts of these cruel persecutors, and permitted His handmaids to receive this innocent but highly valued consolation.

Intelligence having been received, that orders were actually issued to the police; it was at once determined to remain no longer in Paris. And although it was the middle of January, and the winter was uncommonly severe, and the weather such as to render the undertaking very perilous; our friends resolved, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, it being then eleven o'clock at night, to set out instantly, at all hazards, for Port Royal. M. de Saci's sacred remains were immediately placed in a plain hearse, and they commenced their hazardous journey, through deep snows, while the sharp, cutting wind was driving furiously in their faces. In many places the road, which is at best a by-road, was completely choked with high drifts of snow; in others it was absolutely sheeted with ice, so that no horses could keep their footing. The roads would have been considered utterly impassable in any ordinary case; nor could

they possibly have been traversed, but for the incredible labours, and strenuous manual exertion, of the very numerous friends who accompanied the hearse on foot, and whose ardent zeal, had led them to provide proper implements, and nerved them to brave every obstacle in the attempt. It was, as we have said, a remarkably hard winter, and with every precaution, they more than once thought the drifts never could have had a passage cleared through them before day-break. The difficulties they had to encounter were inconceivable; his friends, however, reckoned as nothing the fatigue they endured, and esteemed it as one of the highest honours of their lives to have the privilege of accompanying to its long home the sacred remains of this most faithful and devoted servant of God. As it happened, the very circumstance of the roads being deemed impassable, whilst it protracted their progress, and obliged them to resort to the most laborious efforts, yet probably prevented their being overtaken and arrested. After incredible difficulties, through eighteen miles of dreadful road, in midnight darkness, at about five o'clock in the morning, the hearse reached the brow of the steep wooded hill, which immediately overhangs the monastery of Port Royal.

As soon as the torches winding down the steep descent, amongst the leafless trees, and casting a lurid light upon the snow, announced the approach of the

funeral, it was met by a procession from the monastery. It was a heart affecting sight, to see the breathless corpse of this venerable and aged saint, carried for the last time into that church, where as a boy, even of six years old, his devotion had so often edified those older than himself; where he was consecrated to the priesthood, and on whose altar, he had offered up his first sacrifice. At the great gate of the church, the coffin was met by a hundred nuns, each of whom had sat at his feet as her director. Each held a burning torch, nor could any restrain her tears, as the corpse was borne into the church, and deposited in the centre of the illuminated chapel.

Several of M. de Saci's friends, who, like myself, had just received an intimation, that the corpse would be deposited for the night at St. Jacques, were greatly surprised on reaching the church at seven in the morning, to find that it had been transported during the night.

We immediately set out on foot; and with hearts overwhelmed with grief, followed the traces of the hearse, and the foot-prints of the mourners which were deeply imprinted in the snow, apparently several hours before. Having at length arrived at Port Royal, we found the coffin placed in the church, and every preparation making with all despatch, for his immediate interment. Such strong fears still prevailed, that it was resolved not to wait until the



next day, to perform high mass over him. Every body was gone to hasten the preparations; so that I had the consolatory privilege of staying alone, and without any interruption, by the beloved remains of my dear and saint-like master. I was near M. de Saci, and near him for the last time. This was both my grief and my consolation. Whilst I was thus occupied, a deliberation was carrying on within the monastery; whether they should not give him an ecclesiastical sepulture, arrayed in his full sacerdotal vestments. There was only one objection to this proposal, which was, the doubt that suggested itself how the face might appear when uncovered, as he had now been in his coffin six or seven days. It therefore became necessary to ascertain this, before this mode of interment was finally decided upon. Accordingly, I had not been long seated at the foot of my beloved master; when the door communicating with the nuns' choir opened; and Madame de Fontperlius entered the church to preside at this necessary inspection.

As soon as the winding sheet was unfolded, and the face cloth turned back, that holy, reverend, and placid countenance appeared once more; and in no respect was it altered. The deep peace and stillness of death, which then reigned there, seemed but as the peace and tranquillity which grace had imprinted on it during life. The waxen clay continued to

bear the impress with which the Spirit of GOD, whose temple it once was, had sealed it. Every heart and eye, were riveted on that revered and tranquil countenance, which seemed, even in its peaceful sleep, to breathe that deep humility, modesty, moderation, and unction, which his aspect while living was wont to inspire. My eyes, as well as those of the few allowed to be present, seemed as if they could not be satisfied with gazing on him, whom each would have desired ever to see before him, and whom we had imagined, we should never more have seen on earth. Where was that fearful awe, so generally inspired by the sight of death? But he fell asleep in Jesus, and it seemed, as if a ray of the glory of that heaven, which had just opened to receive his immortal spirit, yet lingered around its late abode. We contemplated him again and again, and were ready to speak, as though he were still living, and could still hear us; and his disciples felt as if they wished once more to embrace their well known master, but a secret reverence withheld them, and warned each heart, that the blessed spirit, now enrolled amongst the sons of light and the spirits of just men made perfect, must henceforth be loved with an affection like himself, eternal, but freed from mortal frailty and weakness.

His remains were then arrayed for the last time, in the sacerdotal vestments. The usual psalms were

sung, and the aspersions and incensings customary on such occasions were performed. After which, the folding doors communicating between the chancel and the nuns' choir, were thrown open, that he might be carried to the spot, which had been marked out within its walls, for his sepulture — a spot purposely selected by the nuns, that the pastor at whose feet they had so often sat, might repose immediately in their choir. Thither we carried his corpse arrayed in his priest's vestments, and on an open bier, through a long avenue of holy nuns — above an hundred and twenty of whom were arranged on either side — each with a burning taper in her hand. Their eyes — so long turned from every earthly object — now bathed in tears, could not refrain from fixing themselves on those sacred remains, which slowly passed before them. And each continued to gaze as long as possible (during the little pauses we purposely made) upon the features of their holy and beloved father whom on earth they were to behold no more. How distinctly do I, at this distance of time, remember the very least circumstances of that never to be forgotten day. I still seem to see the long row of nuns, on either side, and the profound respect, so touchingly indicated by the deep inclinations every one made, as the uncovered bier passed before her. And when it at last reached the open grave, well do I remember how each of the principal nuns — as they

disposed the body to descend into the earth — reverently bent the knee, as she touched the cold hand respectfully with her lips, and silently bathed it with her tears; whilst the full choir continued the funeral chant, with a solemnity most deeply impressive and affecting. For my own part I was so overcome, that I felt as if my very heart and soul were buried in the grave with him. Surely O Lord, it was the marvellous power of Thy grace, by which Thou didst in that day, so strengthen the hearts of thine handmaids, as to enable them worthily to show respect to Thine highly favoured servant. There was not one in all that large assemblage, who instead of uttering songs of praise, would not have willingly indulged a bursting heart, in shedding floods of tears. Nor was there one voice lifted up in those noble anthems, which, had not Thine especial grace prevailed over nature, would not have been suffocated with sighing and tears. But they were the children of grace, and Thy grace it was, that enabled them to mourn their spiritual loss, by yielding rather to the motions and breathings of the Spirit, than by giving way to the meltings of natural feeling. Nay, perhaps the very depth of their love and reverence for their spiritual father, helped to restrain their tears, and to attune their tongues to praise; that they might honour the departed saint, in a manner worthy the fulness of the faith of him whom they so deeply

mourned. Their admirable abbess, the Mère Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, a worthy successor of her aunt the abbess Marie Angélique, told me, that “she thought it unworthy of him, to whom they rendered the last honours, to weep his entrance into the joys of his Lord.” I well remember the next day after the funeral, when I had the honour of waiting on the abbess, before I returned to St. Mandé, that she left all her affairs in order to converse with me fully respecting M. de Saci; and to request me to draw up a memorial of every particular my long and intimate connection with this great man, had given me an opportunity of knowing. But my connection with him was too close to be able at that time, to do so. I indeed endeavoured to express my affection to my dearest master, but I could not suppress my grief; when this admirable abbess most touchingly observed, in a voice grave and determined, but yet, as I well remember, almost choked by the violence of the restraint which she exercised over herself; “My brother, we have now committed to earth, that of our dear father which was but earthly; it remains that in our own hearts, we suffer to pass away on the stream of time, those feelings which GOD has appointed only for time.”

Such was the conduct of the Port Royalists, as recorded by Fontaine, under this heavy stroke, which bereaved them at once both of their spiritual father, and temporal counsellor. But scarcely were they beginning to recover from the stupefaction occasioned by the sudden death of M. de Saci, when a second calamity, equally sudden, and still more unexpected, befel them. Only twenty days after they had been bereaved of their invaluable spiritual father, the public was informed of the death of their equally invaluable spiritual mother—the abbess Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld, the cousin of M. de Saci—who, placed at the helm of Port Royal, as the worthy successor of the Mères Angélique and Agnès, was the hope and stay of the whole community. Her loss was no doubt consequent on that of M. de Saci. Whilst the heart and will of this admirable and truly inestimable woman were devoted with an undivided purpose to GOD, her constitution had received a shock in the death of her director, from which it could not recover.

Outwardly she appeared unaltered; she yielded to no unavailing expressions of sorrow, nor were her duties ever interrupted. Yet it soon became evident, that she who had so courageously been enabled ten years before to survive the death of M. d'Andilli, her natural father, would now not survive that of her aged spiritual one. She expired on the 29th of



January, 1684, aged fifty-nine years and two months, of which she had been professed forty years and four days.

The reverend Mère Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld d'Andilli, was the daughter of M. d'Andilli, and was born on the 25th of November, 1624. At the early age of six years, her father placed her in the school of Port Royal, to be educated by her two aunts, the Mères Angélique and Agnès. Here, even at this tender age, she appeared under deep religious impressions. When she had been there about a year, on learning that she had another little sister just born, and being told they were now five in number, she replied, as if she had been on the eve of her profession, "You say so, because you count us who are placed in this monastery; but remember, we desire to have done with the things of this world, and to be no longer reckoned amongst the people of the world." Even at the early age of twelve years, she was distinguished by such acute penetration, and such undoubted evidences of genius, that the two abbesses often recommended her to the prayers of their friends, in these terms; "Beseech the Lord to bestow upon her a preparation of heart to serve Him; for if she does not do great good, she will assuredly do great evil." Happily she became a prodigy both of piety and talent. She entered the noviciate, at the age of seventeen, and applied herself

with great fervour to fulfil all her duties. She was particularly led to practise great austerities, which no doubt inured her to the hardships she had subsequently to endure, in the close imprisonment she was destined to undergo for the truth. Soon after her profession, she became mistress of the scholars, and afterwards sub-prioress, and mistress of the novices. In the year 1661, the storm burst upon Port Royal, during which, as we have already seen, her aunt, the Mère Angélique, departed this life. Her niece was most tenderly attached to her. But her faith failed not. Her avocations were not interrupted, and no complaint escaped her lips; though no loss could be more sensibly felt. One day, a nun observing the tears trickling down her cheeks, as she sought to proceed with tranquillity in her occupation, said, "Ah! my sister, I do not wonder you feel our irreparable loss!" The Sœur Angélique de St. Jean answered, "A christian should be ashamed of mourning any loss as irreparable, since he possesses GOD, who can more than fill the place of any and of every creature!"

The Mère Angélique de St. Jean was the support of the whole house, in the period which succeeded the death of the Mère Angélique. Her singleness of mind, her wisdom, her strength of character, and her talent for business, rendered her services of the greatest importance. She was the very soul of the house

for the wisdom of her counsels, the solidity of her replies, and the force of her writings. In the midst of all the tempests which shook Port Royal, a truly sublime faith enabled her to remain in a perfectly stedfast course of conduct.

In 1664, the M. Angélique de St. Jean was closely imprisoned at the convent of the Annunciation, in the quarter of St. Antoine, near Paris, where she had much to suffer for the sake of the truth, being reduced to a complete solitude, and a deprivation of all spiritual assistance, as before related. On the 2d of July, 1665, the imprisoned nuns were restored to Port Royal. On the 13th of May, 1666, her cousin, M. de Saci, was sent to the Bastille. The Mère Angélique de St. Jean wrote him a letter of congratulation, on being counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. At the end of 1668, the pacification of Clement IX. took place, and the captives were liberated. On the 20th of February, 1671, the Mère Agnès expired, and on the 3d of August, 1678, the Mère Angélique de St. Jean became abbess of Port Royal. Ten months later, the death of Madame de Longueville took place; and immediately after, the persecution which overwhelmed Port Royal, burst forth anew. The M. Angélique de St. Jean was animated by the spirit of the M. Angélique and the M. Agnès; to which was added a brilliancy of talent, and intellectual powers, peculiarly her own. In

nothing did she appear to partake of the weakness of her sex. Her exalted genius gained her the admiration of the first men of the age. The unction and piety which flowed from her lips, penetrated the heart, whilst her learning and talents delighted those who either heard her converse, attended her exhortations as abbess, or read her works. A profound knowledge of scripture, a perfect acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, a familiar knowledge of the Greek and Latin fathers in their original languages, added to her discourses a weight, perhaps never before equalled in any of her sex. Her works which still edify and delight those conversant with them, are *Conferences of Port Royal*, 3 vols. 8vo. ; *Miséricordes*, likewise in 3 vols. *Reflections*, offered to the nuns, to prepare them for persecution ; a most deeply experimental work. Three volumes of her *Rélations* ; and *Mémoires* of her aunt, the Mère Angélique. *Rélations* of the lives of many of the nuns of Port Royal. Many admirably drawn up articles, in the *Nécrologe*, and 2 vols. 8vo. on the rule of St. Bennet—all works equally honourable to her talents and piety. Besides the rare endowments which peculiarly fitted her for her post as an abbess, she was likewise possessed of much information, not common to her sex. She had a scientific acquaintance with natural philosophy, with medicine and surgery, and with the principles of musical composition. She also eminently excelled in

modelling in wax, and many pieces of hers yet remain, as monuments of her very rare genius and skill in this art. The motive which induced her to exercise this talent, is worthy of record. After the revenues of Port Royal were unjustly seized, and the nuns were harassed by so many vexatious requisitions that they had scarcely wherewith to maintain themselves, this excellent abbess learnt this art, to enable her without detriment to her community, or her other poor, to provide for the maintenance of several ladies, who were attached to the cause of the Stuarts (several of whom were protestants), and who found themselves in destitute circumstances in France. In all the works and actions of this excellent and admirable woman, the same character of deep piety and of capacious intellect were discernible. They all bore the stamp of humility and self-abasement, without meanness; of unshaken firmness, without pride; and of an exact and tender conscience, without littleness. Her total absence from the vanity too often inspired by superior talents, her renunciation of self-will; her profound contempt for all worldly things; her preeminent acquirements, and the unshaken firmness of her mind, caused her to be regarded, even by her enemies, as a prodigy of piety and talent. One anecdote of this admirable abbess must not be omitted. The Duke of Luynes, on his second marriage, made a present of his seat at Vaumurier, to the monastery of Port Royal

des Champs. It consisted of a noble mansion house, a spacious park, and productive gardens, which were contiguous to the grounds of Port Royal. And as it was bestowed at the time that Port Royal de Paris, the gift of her own family, and two-thirds of their revenue were so unjustly wrested from them, it promised to be truly invaluable, and to form a large addition to their income, in a time of most perplexing and distressing necessity. The Dauphin being one day on a hunting expedition near Port Royal, was so struck with the beauty of the place, that he determined to ask the king to purchase it of the nuns, for a very handsome remuneration. But the Mère Angélique de St. Jean, having heard that the purpose to which he meant to apply it, was an unworthy one, did not choose for the sake of any remuneration, to allow the house to be inhabited by such a person as the Dauphin meant to place there. She therefore, before the king made the request known, sent a number of workmen, and had the house completely demolished, even to the very foundations; preferring the loss of so considerable a property, to the connivance at evil, or to treat the king with disrespect by a refusal. The king having heard of this noble action, praised it in the highest terms. Such is the short sketch of this admirable nun, "to whom," say her French biographers, "no praises can do justice; and of whom we shall say no more, from an impossi-



bility to speak worthily of her merits." We refer the reader for a further account, to Messrs. du Fossé, and Fontaine; *le Nécrologe Mémoires de Port Royal* from p. 500 of Vol. 3; and also to the fourth volume of *Vies Edifiantes*. We shall simply give a short sketch of her illness and death, from an eye witness, who writes thus:—

“The Mère Angélique de St. Jean, counted as nothing, the very rare talents with which it had pleased God so abundantly to endow her. And she delighted to return by a profound humility, into that state of self-abasement and obscurity, from which her talents seemed, always against her will, calling her forth. She especially venerated M. de Sacy, who had been her spiritual guide from her youth upwards. And as he remained after so many bereavements, as the last pillar, we may say, of their house, so his sudden and unexpected death was indeed an overwhelming calamity. On hearing of his decease, she retired to her own room, and after some time spent alone in prayer, she resumed her duties with seriousness, but yet without appearing to be cast down. When in the hour of recreation, some of the nuns appeared overwhelmed with grief, she said, ‘God has indeed taken our father to Himself, and he is now beholding His glory! Whilst our beloved father is rejoicing in his glorious and blissful vision, his spirit, I think, calls us to admire the plenitude of wisdom,

and of power and mercy, by which GOD can either raise up instruments on earth as it pleases Him, or take them away ; and with equal care, carry on His work by them or without them. He stops or turns the streams of living water at His pleasure. The spring of His love, mercy and wisdom, is an abyss, ever equally unfathomable, and a fountain which ever equally flows.' This thought, and the profound resignation she desired to feel to the will of GOD, prevented one murmuring expression. She performed all her duties as before. Nevertheless her health evidently sunk under this overpowering stroke, and it was obvious, that like St. Paul, she was in a strait between two. 'Longing to depart, and to be with Christ, which was far better ;' and yet, willing to remain for the benefit of her sisters. The twenty-fourth of January—the day on which she was seized with her mortal illness—she had spent as usual, having been at matins, and then having employed herself in her various duties during the rest of the morning. Amongst other occupations, she had given a peculiarly excellent instruction to the nuns. She spent the intervening time until vespers, in visiting the sick. As the abbess went down from the infirmary to vespers, she necessarily passed the tomb of M. de Sacy, which had only been closed twelve days before. She prostrated herself on his grave, and remained some time in fervent, weeping

prayer. On rising up, she felt a sudden and violent pain in her side, as if she had received a heavy blow. She however went into vespers, supposing it might be owing to the constrained posture in which she had been. But in the midst of the office, she was seized with a shivering fit, and although she finished the service, her voice faltered so perceptibly that an apprehension was even then entertained of what really followed.

“The abbess herself, well understood this stroke, and knew it to be the call to prepare for her removal into the eternal world. ‘If I considered myself only,’ said she to the prioress, ‘earnestly should I desire to depart and to be with Christ; but the compassion I feel for this poor little bereaved flock, cannot permit me to be indifferent to the trouble and difficulties in which it must be involved, by the event of my death before my triennial expires.’ Nevertheless as she trusted that GOD who had called her to Himself would take charge of her community, she only thought of giving Him thanks for the favour she expected. Her disposition appears by her expressions to a sister who wished to take off her veil, and to assist her to prepare for bed. ‘My dear sister,’ said she, ‘let me restore it to GOD, who gave it to me to-morrow forty years ago. When we enter into a serious illness, and one from which in all probability we shall not arise, we must begin by pre-

paring to restore our veil to Him who gave it.' She then said the whole of the *Te Deum*, although her sisters besought her not to do so, on account of the shivering and pain which she was evidently suffering. Seeing the consternation of the community, she said, 'We can more easily submit to GOD than to man because we have a full assurance that He does all well. . Let us only wait His will, in a child-like spirit, *Dominus est*;' then entering the bed from which she never arose, she added: 'Above all my children, let us never forget to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; we will bless the Lord at all times, and let His praise be continually in our mouths.' The shivering continued for four hours, accompanied with the most agonizing pain. Before she received the last sacraments, she wished to beg forgiveness of the community for all wherein she might have erred. The prioress perceiving it, did all in her power to prevent her, and also urged her confessor to prevent her. But she persisted, and made her excuses in the most humble terms. After receiving the sacraments, she wished to collect her thoughts; but the violence of the fever preventing it, she desired that the hundred and third psalm might be read to her. Her lungs then became so oppressed, that she could no longer speak, and her mind began to wander. Nevertheless she seemed, even in this state, to preserve the same direction of heart. For the death of a

young man being mentioned in her presence, who had formerly been at Port Royal, but who had again returned to the world, she was so overcome with grief, as to appear for a time to be almost suffocated; at length recovering herself, she exclaimed, ‘O what do you say, O terrible and afflicting news!’ The nuns in vain tried to comfort her, thinking she knew not what she said, as she had never seen this man; but she said, ‘It is his soul—it is his soul! O my sisters, I am on my DEATH BED; it is *now*, I feel the INFINITE VALUE OF THE SOUL!’ She often spoke of him, and always with the same inexpressible grief. The day before her death, all remedies being unavailing, she said to the community with her usual tranquillity, ‘See my dear sisters, in how short a time death can call us away. Do you not observe how changed my voice is, which I can scarcely make you understand, and do you hear the rattling in my throat!’ Some time after, she requested that she might not be spoken to concerning any earthly affair, that she might think of GOD only. Her mind being now restored and perfectly clear, she was greatly distressed at seeing the tears and bitter grief of the community. With much effort, she was only able to say, ‘My dear sisters, we must not look to consequences. Your hearts must follow me up to the throne of GOD, mine must not be drawn down with yours, to the concerns of earth.’ She then tried again

to exhort her community, but was unable to do so. The prioress having assembled a part of the nuns in the evening in her room, besought her with tears, as their abbess, to give her benediction both to those present and those absent. She only answered by lifting up her hands and eyes to heaven, and saying in the words of the Song of Solomon, ‘O ye daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you that ye stir not up, nor awake my Beloved till He please,’ which verse she repeated in Latin. The prioress represented to her that she spoke for herself only, according to her longing desire to go to her Lord; but that her community besought her to have compassion on them too, and bestow on them some words of consolation and instruction. She replied again by quoting the preceding words of the same song, ‘*Læva ejus sub capite meo et dextera illius amplexitur me.*’ She was unable to say more. Some time after, the prioress seemed stupified with the excess of her grief, and when there was an evident change for death, they seemed not to know what it was, and inquired of the nurse. The dying abbess replied, ‘It is the voice of my beloved, behold he sheweth himself—he sheweth himself through the lattice—he saith unto me, Rise up my fair one, come away.’

“The community being again assembled in her room, they besought her with tears, to give them her benediction. She accordingly lifted up her hand



to do so, but being unable to speak, she opened a psalter that was presented to her, and made them a sign to recite the seventy-third psalm, which seemed beautifully apposite to the situation of Port Royal at that time ; she soon after fell asleep in the Lord, without having lost her recollection for one single moment, and during all the time, her countenance was almost radiant with the expression of peace, sweetness, and heavenly joy, with which her soul seemed enrapt ; and after death the same heavenly expression still remained.

“ After her decease the Mère du Fargis, her prioress, was chosen abbess ; she appointed as her prioress, the Mère St. Thecla Racine, aunt to the celebrated tragedian Racine.

“ The Mère Angélique de St. Jean, expired on the 29th of January, 1684.”

Nor was this overwhelming blow the conclusion of the catalogue of disasters, which at this time overwhelmed Port Royal. M. de Luzanci, the brother of the Mère Angélique de St. Jean, was at Pomponne, when his cousin M. de Saci, expired in his arms. At his death he appeared bereft of every outward comfort. He however promised himself some relief, in the correspondence of his sister, the Mère Angélique de St. Jean. For her, he had always enter-

tained a peculiar veneration ; and his fervent piety, and great gentleness, and self-distrust, made him feel the want of a character of her masculine strength, and exalted but well matured holiness. Her letters always seemed to have an instantaneous and powerful effect upon him. Her glowing eloquence, her pure and holy life, her solid understanding, her force of character, were highly revered by him ; and he had hoped to find some relief and consolation by continually pouring out his heart to her, in a close correspondence. When however the totally unexpected news of her dying state arrived, it was like a thunder clap. He was so struck, that he remained for a considerable time motionless ; and was in a kind of stupor, incapable alike both of speaking and of hearing. At length awaking as from a trance, he ordered his horse, and with his utmost speed reached Port Royal, only in time to receive his sister's last dying breath. He returned more dead than alive. It seemed as though his heart died within him ; and yet the fire of love he had so long and constantly cherished for these two persons — his only earthly attachments — seemed rekindled with redoubled force. It seemed as if the tempter of the brethren, had been permitted to use M. Luzanci's memory, to bring back every passage of their most lovely lives to his mind, with a vividness which actually rent his heart. His body, at all times weak, could not bear such intensity of feeling.

On his return from Port Royal, to M. de Pomponne his brother, he entered the room — where as a child, his sister Angélique had so often been, and which his spiritual father M. de Saci, occupied — and he felt as one bereft of all. The two last props of his house and his two only ties to earth were gone. He could not speak for some time; at length looking round at their vacant seats wishfully, he said, “To whom now shall we go?” Then suddenly stretching out his arms towards heaven, and with an almost supernatural animation sparkling through his tears he added, “even to thee Lord! Thou hast the words of eternal life.” He sat down with apparent composure, but he was immediately seized with a burning fever. He was taken to his bed; and wishing to regulate his affairs, he sent for me, (it is Fontaine who writes) to consult with me about them. Two days after, I arrived; and on passing by the church of St. Eustache, the shock I received can scarcely be conceived, when I saw the corpse of this gentle and loving saint laid on a bier, preparatory to its removal to Port Royal des Champs. He died on the 10th of February, 1684, aged 61; only eleven days after his deeply beloved and most revered sister. Thus did these lovely ones, the most excellent of the earth, follow their spiritual father; nor were they the only ones who did so. The Sœur de St. Eustoque de Flescelles de Brégy, received in the death of M. de Saci, and of

her abbess, her death blow ; she followed them to the blissful mansions of her Father's house on April the first, of the same year. Her friend the Sœur Magdeleine de St. Christine Briquet, did not long survive them. She had been the pupil of both these estimable persons, even from infancy, the particular friend of the Mère Eustoquie, and, like all the three, was distinguished for her talents as well as her piety. She applied herself after their death to arrange an edition of M. de Saci's spiritual letters, and of the works of the abbess Angélique de St. Jean ; which being completed, she said she knew that her work on earth was done, and died, in peaceful triumph, on the 30th of November, 1689, full of faith and good works.

The "Lettres Edifiantes," contain above seventy letters, written to the community on the death of these excellent persons. We shall insert only two of them ; one is from the pen of M. de St. Marthe, and was addressed to the abbess Angélique de St. Jean, on the death of M. de Saci ; the second was written a few days after by M. l'Abbé Boileau, on the occasion of her own. It is addressed to her sister, the last remaining nun of the name of Arnauld, then living at Port Royal.

*Letter from Madame St. Marthe to the Reverend Mère  
Angélique de St. Jean, on the death of M. de Saci.*

Feb. 4, 1684.

What an awful and astonishing contrast, my dear mother, exists between the death of the saints, and that of those who die in their sins! The latter indeed truly suffer death; since they are at that awful moment, separated for ever from Him, who is the true life. They become victims of the great enemy—the accuser—of him who was a murderer from the beginning. They are enclosed for ever in the snares of the father of lies, the arch-deceiver! They are irremediably poisoned by the mortal venom of the insinuating serpent, who first deluded mankind. They become for ever a prey to that roaring lion, who now goeth about seeking whom he may devour! They are for ever cast into outer darkness, where their worm shall never die, and their fire shall never be quenched!

But *precious in the sight of the Lord* is the death of his saints! Their departure from this earth is the consummation of an heavenly and divine life; and by dying here, they only live more perfectly, and become eternally and fully united to God. When the sinner dies, he consummates the death of the soul. The disciple of Christ dies only to that body of sin and death, which it was the whole

effort of his life to vanquish, and whose complete destruction he longed for. He dies indeed to this world, and to all that is in it. But it is a world, from which, during his mortal life, it was his happy choice to live separated; and which, in his baptismal vows, he had renounced. The saints die as to their mortal and fleshly tabernacle; but it is only that body, which was from its frailty the cause of so many hindrances — which was such a perpetual clog, and from whose incumbrance it was their earnest and daily wish to be delivered. They die, in short, to all which was the subject of their fear, their grief, and their distress. Tears are wiped away from their eyes, sorrow and sighing shall be no more. O what an unspeakable gain to them, is the loss of this mortal life, since in one short moment, they obtain the sum of all their desires. What still remained frail, becomes perfected; what remained carnal, becomes altogether spiritual; what temptations still beset them, quit their hold! They become at once disengaged from the adhesion of a thousand weaknesses; their bonds are loosed, their earthly incumbrances fall off, and they enter at once, into the perfect liberty of the children of GOD! Jerusalem above is free! and her freed and happy citizens, are able to exercise in a more completely holy and happy manner, those affections, the seed of which indeed was sown, but whose growth was impeded, by the



ungenial clime of earth; in short, they are become the spirits of the just, made perfect. They indeed, on earth, lived as in the presence of GOD, and walked before GOD, being attentive to follow His light, and His love was shed abroad in their hearts; but now they are intimately united to GOD. Nothing shall ever be able to separate them from Him they love! They are penetrated with the illumination of His glory. The fire of His love burns within them. Self is, in those redeemed spirits, no more! They belong wholly, and without reserve, to GOD. Those who are entered upon that blessed life, are indeed passed from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality! They are a living sacrifice, a living temple, a living altar, to Him who is the living GOD, the Father of spirits, the King of saints, eternal, immortal, and invisible. They have no other will but His will; no other life, but in Him who is life itself; no other treasure, but Him who is their exceeding great reward; no other happiness, but Him who is the ever blessed; He is entirely theirs, and they are entirely His.

Your greatest consolation, my dear mother, during the life of M. de Saci, was undoubtedly that of knowing you had in him a true pastor; one whom GOD had anointed with the spirit of his prophets, and who having been especially appointed to the conduct of your house, applied himself with his whole

heart and spirit, not only to his own personal sanctification, but to the advancement of the flock, over which CHRIST had appointed him overseer.

His largeness of heart and of charity seemed, as far as we can say so of a human being, to correspond with the importance of his sacred office. The souls GOD had given him lived in his heart. The desire of their final salvation seemed to occupy his whole attention; and his heart and hands were continually lifted up towards heaven in their behalf, and to offer himself with them, a living sacrifice to GOD. His desire is now fulfilled! and the time of his exile is past! His journey is accomplished! The days of his pilgrimage are over! His tutelage and his minority are ended, he has entered upon his inheritance! He is now for ever with CHRIST! He then saw through a glass darkly, he now sees face to face! He beholds for ever the Holy one, before whom angels bow; and the view of that ineffable plenitude of holiness, perfects his sanctification. He sees the Saviour whom he loved as He is, and he is now transformed into His image. He is now, one heart, one mind, one spirit, with the great and sovereign high priest of his profession; he is one in that blessed community of saints, with whom there is joy in heaven, over one sinner that repents. O my dear mother, sorrow we must, whilst we remain in the twilight of sense, and in the weakness of the flesh;

but let our sorrow be not unworthy of his fruition, and of our anticipation of heavenly glory, of the sight and of the assured hope of that eternal and rapidly approaching bliss, which shall soon swallow up all grief, in a flood of joy, and glory, and praise.

Let us not weep over those saints, who are entered into the joy of their Lord; but rather mourn over our own sins and frailties, who are as orphans left behind; and may this sorrow prove salutary, through the grace of CHRIST, in urging us so to live here below, that the life may be perfected in heaven, which we have so imperfectly cultivated on earth. Such is the example he set us, who as a true servant of the great Good Shepherd, faithfully fed His sheep; and is now gone before to that heavenly mansion, where his little flock shall soon, one by one, follow him. Let us indeed, often, in heart and mind, dwell on the actions and the remembrance, of that dear and holy servant of GOD. The blessed memory of what GOD *has* done for His saints, should quicken in us a trust and hope, of what He is equally willing to do for us. This is the true and genuine use of the memory of departed friends. O let us not abuse it. Let their blessed remembrance form not a tie, to bind the heart down to that portion of our earthly pilgrimage, which is gone by, or to consume the portion yet to come, with fruitless sorrow, but let us urge on our steps, with a holy speed, to overtake

our loved companions ; and to be reunited with the blessed friends who are gone before, and who may sweeten the prospect, even of the glories of the new Jerusalem, by teaching us now to catch, amidst its beams of light, a glimpse of many an endeared and familiar countenance, which is waiting to welcome us. Thus, as we grow older, GOD in mercy takes one friend after another ; only desolating the world we are about to leave, to people for us, with dear friends, the heavenly inheritance we are going to enter — thus in condescension to our weakness, blending natural and spiritual joy. O then my dear mother, rejoice amidst affliction ; rejoice not only that our names are written with theirs in the Lamb's book of life ; but rejoice also that we have so much treasure in heaven, in those saints whom we love, and who are gone before.

*Letter of M. l'Abbé Boileau, on the death of M. de Saci, and that of the Mère Angélique de St. Jean Arnauld.*

February 4, 1684.

My honoured sister,

Blessed be GOD, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the GOD of consolation ; who is able abundantly to sustain us by the supporting staff, even whilst He afflicts us by the chastening rod.

And who indeed, my dear sister, could sustain us in these two overwhelming and almost simultaneous calamities, if the Lord Himself, who inflicts the wound, were not also the Good Physician, whose divine love and power were able and willing to heal it? Both natural affection and reason, both nature and grace, equally, to the shortness of human vision, appear to furnish their various considerations, to enhance the calamity; and which ever way the bleeding heart turns, so far from alleviating distress, they each adduce multiplied grounds for saying, 'this wound is fatal! this breach is irreparable!' But my dear sister, the just live not by sight, but by faith. It is no more necessary to the disciple, to see the whole of his spiritual, than of his temporal course. He who is the light of Israel, and who has His dwelling in the pillar of cloud, goes before, and that is enough. This consideration enables His children to traverse the bed of that stormy ocean, through midnight darkness, (which shall engulph unbelieving hosts,) with as much confidence, as they would walk in the open champaign, beneath the brightest sunbeams. Yes, my dear sister, the faith by which the just live, finds subjects of consolation, even in circumstances, which to the eye of sense present nothing but desolation. We lose two persons whose eminent piety, whose distinguished talents, whose uncommon force and vigour of mind, and

whom our rare and accumulated trials, rendered particularly necessary, and as it should seem, humanly speaking, absolutely indispensable to us. They were our spiritual guides, our temporal counsellors, our strength, and our right hand. But what of that? "He," says St. Augustine, "loses nothing, who possesses nothing but in Him whom the soul can never lose." O let us then rather pray, that the clouds of earthly frailty and sin, may be dissipated by the Sun of Righteousness; and that our youth may be renewed like the eagle's to behold Him, and Him only. He who truly, and practically, and livingly believes in Jesus Christ, dead, and risen again for His church, can never esteem any as really dead, but those who are living at a distance from Him who is our true life, who is the source of vivification, and also the Bread of Life, to maintain vitality in all who have once heard His voice; and hearing it, have risen from their graves, and received life, from a death of trespasses and sins.

No, my dear sister, that faithful minister of Jesus Christ, over whose tomb we have shed so many tears, that excellent and great mother in Israel, lamented by so many daughters, are not dead any more than Lazarus! They sleep in peace, and they are now enrolled amongst the spirits of those just made perfect, who may be said not only to live, though they are dead, but to live more perfectly



because they are dead. Here, the sin and misery which cleaves even to the most faithful, infuse a tincture of death into the most saintly life. Is it to be called life, to drag on an existence here below, panting indeed after Thee in spirit, but impeded by the deadly languor infused by earthly desires and temptations? Is it living, to feel continually weighed down by the load of sin and death, notwithstanding all our efforts to soar towards heaven? Is it living, to drag about with us daily, this body of death, which if we yield to, will sink us into perdition and everlasting death? Does the eagle live, whilst he flaps his wings in vain, chained down to his perch? seeking indeed with eagle eye the sun, but condemned to the darkness of his mew; and fed on dead and corrupt substances, instead of soaring above the clouds in his native element.

The children of Babylon may seek objects of attachment here; but woe to those who are so unhappy as to find them; as for us, my sister, never let us forget, that we have the privilege to be children of Jerusalem; the sons and daughters of the Most High. Let us then suffer our captivity on earth with patience; but let us also long for the moment of our deliverance; and evermore may our conversation, flowing from the abundance of our hearts, be where our treasure is, in heaven!

GOD forbid then that we should be inconsolable,

as if we had no hope. Our brothers and our sisters, the church of the first born, are now feasting in the house of their Father! They eat the bread of life without alloy! Can we wish to see those blessed spirits of the just made perfect, once our dear companions here, reduced to feed in this strange and evil world, upon the husks, that are the food of swine? Ah no! rejoice, holy and blessed souls, in the abundance of blessings now prepared for you! Feast on the wine of the kingdom! slake your thirst at the fountains of the waters of everlasting life, where the Son Himself is now leading you! To you, sighing and sorrow are fled away! all tears are wiped away from your eyes! The miseries and woes of this life are now as a tale that is gone by! yet if you, like the angels of heaven, minister to those who are heirs of salvation—if you form part of that innumerable cloud of witnesses with which we are surrounded—oh, do not forget us who are still struggling with those conflicts; whilst the Lamb has already given you the victory, and encompassed you with songs of deliverance. But no, my sister, never let us feel we have lost them! Those happy souls forget us not. Love is a plant of heavenly growth. It is but an exotic here, and though implanted, with every other heavenly seed, by Christ, in the heart of His redeemed, it only attains its full perfection and maturity, in the

heavens of which it is a native. Nor can the love of any saints on earth, be compared with that of redeemed spirits above. They know, not by faith, but by sight, the will of heaven, the value of the soul, and the love of Christ, in a way we cannot do. Their charity is now a flame without impurity; all that is natural and terrestrial is consumed; and their affection burns with a pure flame, kindled in the flame of divine love. Never then let us grieve, either for them, or for ourselves. They are in the full enjoyment of Him whom their souls on earth best loved; and their love for us is become a purer, holier, and closer love. Whilst they lived upon earth, we might have feared their fall to the earth. Now they are secured beyond all possibility of fall. When Adam was in a state of innocence, GOD said to him, "sin not, lest ye die;" but now he says to fallen man "die that ye sin not."

Let us then rejoice, my very highly honoured sister, notwithstanding the oppression of heart, which nature feels; again I say unto you, rejoice! as seeing sin completely destroyed, even to its very root, in those holy souls, who until their death, mourned over it, and lamented it, as their trial and grief. O rejoice with them, that GOD alone reigns in those, who only lived for GOD. "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!"

With respect to ourselves, my dear sister, although

a thousand reasons render us acutely sensible of the loss of these two holy persons, so closely bound to us, by every tie, both natural and spiritual; yet, let us never forget, that as the self-existent GOD needs nobody; so does the same all-sufficient GOD, abundantly supply the place of all persons, to those who truly love Him. Let us not then look upon their deaths as an interruption to spiritual communication. The communion of saints is the privilege of all citizens of the new Jerusalem. They are amidst the numbers of the spirits of just men made perfect; and they need neither time nor space, to hear, and to succour us. Perhaps, indeed, we may even feel the influence of their wisdom, and love, more forcibly, for this separation; which can only divide from us that which belonged to the body, and which has purified them, and rendered them altogether spiritual, uniting them more closely than ever to our GOD. Elijah, on his ascension to heaven, transmitted to his disciple Elisha, with his mantle, a double portion of his spirit. Jesus in order to unite the limbs to their living head, poured out upon His disciples more light and power of the Spirit, than they had possessed during His life; so do I hope, my dear sister, that the death of these two persons we so much regret, may prove to us an abundant source of watchfulness, grace, and benediction. It is already a great favour, that it pleases GOD to send so many external circumstances in His pro-

vidence, to detach us from this life, and to occupy our hearts and minds with the contemplation of a happy eternity. When we remember how contrary are the movements of the natural heart to those of divine grace; we must acknowledge, however difficult to nature, that it is a blessing, when the external providence of GOD almost compels us to obey the suggestions of His grace. For my own part, I see no outward means so likely to break the ties which bind our hearts to this earth, as a separation; by its remaining no longer the abode of those blessed saints, who might have rendered our exile from our Father's house supportable. They have entered their inheritance, undefiled and incorruptible! They are now inhabitants of mansions in their Father's house. Let us especially, who have taken upon us vows of renouncing this world—let us examine, whether there be no danger to us, who neither love the world, nor the things of the world, lest we should find, in the society of those blessed saints, who are come out of the world, not merely a lawful consolation, and help in our season of exile, and in our path of pilgrimage, but an unsuspected and lurking temptation to the heart, to slide into an attachment for, and trust in His creatures, which belong to the Creator only. If Jesus Christ once came in the flesh, a participant in our nature, to reveal Himself in a way suited to our frailty, He now dwells with us by His Spirit, and is to be sought

by us, in that heavenly glory, where, surrounded by ten thousand of His saints, we shall see Him as He is, without any danger of losing Him. Pray the GOD of all consolation, my dear sister, to penetrate my soul with these truths; and that every tie loosened on earth, may be the means of more closely binding me to heaven. May the Lord Jesus soon come, and take us to Himself! O happy time, when sin, which is the real source of our misery, shall cease; and the eternal happiness of perfect holiness, shall begin — when we shall truly enter that new Jerusalem, of which though admitted to the rights of citizenship, and obedient to her laws, we have never yet seen eye to eye, and are then not yet fully moulded into the spirit and customs of its redeemed inhabitants. Yes, my dear and honoured sister, blessed indeed will be the day, when we drop this mortal coil; and when the celestial doors, which so many of our dear companions have entered, open to receive us likewise. In that blessed land our bodies will no longer be subject to death, our souls to sin, our knowledge to error, or our affections to disorder. Truly may we say, “the Spirit and the bride say come.” May every one that heareth answer “come! Amen! so come Lord Jesus.”

Believe me, in our common Lord, with very profound respect and consideration, my very highly



honoured sister, your very obedient and very humble servant,

BOILEAU, *Archdeacon of Paris.*

Such was the spirit of Port Royal in the midst of the heaviest temporal affliction and spiritual bereavements. Tried on the one hand by the rapidly succeeding losses of their most valuable directors and friends, amongst whom were Arnould, Tillemont, Claude Lancelot, St. Marthe, and Fontaine: and vexed and harassed on the other by perpetual litigations and encroachments on the part of the rapacious nuns of Port Royal de Paris; spoiled by constantly renewed oppression and injustice on the part of the court, and the Jesuitical party who instigated its measures, the nuns still maintained the same constancy and fidelity. Many indeed were called from their weary pilgrimage below to join the church triumphant above, but the lessening flock still remained faithful at its post. Their loins were girt about, and their lamps were burning, and they patiently waited their Lord's appearing. Thus affairs continued till the year 1710. At that period the final destruction of Port Royal was resolved on. The account of which forms the second part of this work.

## PART SECOND.

## CHAPTER I.

## DISPERSION.

THE Cardinal de Noailles had long been harassed by the court party on the one side, and by the Jesuits on the other, to issue a decree for the immediate suppression and extinction of the abbey of Port Royal des Champs. He was a man of a timid and feeble mind, and both kindly and piously disposed, but incapable of acting with firmness and decision.

He most painfully felt the part which he was called upon, and even persecuted, to perform in this iniquitous business. Although he abhorred persecution, he was unable to withstand it when it was directed against himself—too humane willingly to oppress, but too feeble to succour the innocent of his flock, by the firm defence which he as their pastor owed them. After resisting the importunities of both parties for a considerable time, this unhappy man became an awful exemplification of the common observation — that the weak are often made to per-

form as tools, acts of injustice, which the wicked who direct them, would never dare to perpetrate as principals.

Who would have thought, that whilst the abandoned Harley, and the ambitious Péréfixe, exasperated as they were against Port Royal, and earnestly as they wished its destruction, never dared to lift a finger against that celebrated institution, it should have been reserved to the succeeding archiepiscopate of the kindly disposed Noailles, to level its venerable towers with the ground, to tear up and scatter the remains of its hallowed dead, and to leave scarcely one stone of it upon another?

One anecdote respecting the part he took in this sacrilegious affair, will clearly exhibit his character. It is related by M. Thomassin, the cardinal's promoteur.\* About the time the question of the destruction of Port Royal was agitated, but before it was decreed in council, the cardinal one day sent for M. Thomassin, and on his arrival at the palace, thus addressed him, "Sir, the destruction of Port Royal being decided upon, you must draw up and present me a petition to that effect." M. Thomassin waited till the conclusion of the cardinal's speech, and then respectfully but firmly represented to him, that he was

\* "*Promoteur*," an ecclesiastic attached to the superior clergy, who have a wide jurisdiction. It is his office to transact the ecclesiastical law business of the diocese.

deceived, and that in fact, Port Royal was wholly different from the account he had received of it; which was only in truth the invidious misrepresentations of a party, who had long been its avowed enemies, and who were inimical, not only to Port Royal, but to every thing good; and after expressing his surprise that his Eminence did not see how he endangered his own salvation, by lending the sanction of his name, to a deed which could not fail to dishonour him for ever, he thus concluded: "Yes, my Lord, it is only persons jealous of your very high reputation, who would seek to engage your Lordship in such an undertaking. They see plainly that the world reverences your virtues and admires your character: they cannot attack the orthodoxy of your doctrine, and they wish to tarnish the lustre of so many excellences, and to serve their own malice, by endeavouring to make you their agent, in an odious and detestable enterprise, which they are by far too prudent to venture upon in their own persons; and from which they will afterwards exculpate themselves, by throwing all the odium upon your Eminence."

The cardinal evidently struck with these observations, after a moment's pause, replied, "Sir, make me a memorial of all you have just now advanced; and of all the reasons which ought to induce a suspension of the destruction of Port Royal; but let it be drawn up immediately; I cannot wait, for I am

pressed on all hands. — They absolutely give me no peace.”

At the end of two or three days, M. Thomassin, as desired, presented the memorial to the cardinal, who perused it to the end; after which he thanked him for opening his eyes to the snare which was laid for him.

The enemies of Port Royal, who were very impatient for its demolition, did not fail to visit the cardinal, and soon discovered how the affair stood. They were beyond measure surprised and chagrined, at the total change in his disposition; especially when he frankly told them the reasons on which it was founded. To obtain a reversal of his decision, they at once perceived that intimidation must be resorted to, and they accordingly told him, that the king was bent upon it, and that he would be much displeased at seeing his purpose thwarted by the archbishop of Paris alone; and that when he should be called upon for a justification of his refusal, it would be ridiculous to see his Eminence — the archbishop of the first province of the kingdom, and a cardinal of the holy college — exculpating himself by pleading submission to the fancies of his secretary.

The archbishop, piqued by the sarcasm which accompanied this observation, habitually timorous, fearful also of the double humiliation of ridicule,

completely wearied by his enemies, and in doubt which side was true, finally agreed to comply with all they required.

He then sent for Thomassin, and in a tone evidently chagrined and constrained, but yet decided, and as if to get rid of the business at once, said that the affair was finally decided upon, and therefore the petition must be drawn up without further delay.

M. Thomassin respectfully testified his astonishment at so unexpected and decided a resolution, and asked his Eminence, whether he had taken any measures to ascertain the truth of those assertions which were to be alleged as the very basis of the petition? He also ventured to enquire whether his Eminence had found any reason to doubt the truth of the facts contained in the memorial, which he had so recently the honour of presenting to him?

The Cardinal replied with evident impatience — “What is all this to the purpose? — The affair is decided upon by the privy counsellors. — There is nothing left but to execute it.”

M. Thomassin was about to speak; when the archbishop, interrupting him with an irascibility of manner and a voice of thunder, quite unusual with him, said, “Sir, I am issuing a command, not asking advice; nor is it your place to offer it unasked. It was justly observed to me, that you were a very young



man, and that it did not become me to be led by you."

M. Thomassin again made an attempt to speak, when M. de Noailles again closed his mouth with these memorable words.

"Sir, I insist on being obeyed. Draw out the petition. It shall be done."

On which M. Thomassin, bowing respectfully, replied with great firmness, but yet with becoming modesty:

"My Lord, your Eminence is resolved to do it, and Thomassin is equally resolved not to do it." Then with tears in his eyes, and much emotion, (for he was sincerely attached to the cardinal,) he added, "No, my Lord, it shall never be said that your faithful servant Thomassin has lent his pen to your Eminence's enemies, who only plot and combine to dishonour you." Thus ended this memorable and very painful interview.

On leaving the cardinal, M. Thomassin, greatly agitated, repaired to his own church — that of St. Nicholas du Louvre—of which he was Provost. He immediately prostrated himself at the foot of the high altar, where he remained for a very considerable time; and although he had blasted all his worldly prospects, he afterwards declared, that he felt a peace which cannot be expressed, and an awful, but ineffably glorious and joyful sense of the presence of God, which

pervaded his whole soul. Whilst thus engaged, he heard the bells ring for evening salutation; but he was so inexpressibly absorbed in blissful communings with his GOD, that the persons who came in to evening prayers, seemed to him as though he saw them in a dream; nor did he rise from his knees, till the darkening shades of evening scarcely shewed the white dresses of the Sisters of Charity glimmering in the remote distance, and till the last solitary lamp was extinguished; and he was wont to say that he never felt the divine presence so powerfully, and that his soul was, as it were, transported with the joy, sweetness, consolation, and blissful tranquillity of that happy moment.

Whilst such were the contemplations of M. Thomassin, the Cardinal de Noailles was very differently employed. It was by no means difficult to find other ecclesiastics, more pliable and less conscientious than M. Thomassin; accordingly the order was given to another person, the petition was drawn out and presented, and the destruction of Port Royal was soon after formally decreed by the council.

On the eleventh of July, 1709, the Cardinal de Noailles passed the decree for the suppression and extinction of the monastery of Port Royal des Champs.

On the twenty-ninth of October, of the same year, at half-past seven in the morning, the nuns, having

attended mass, were assembled in chapter, according to custom, when a message was brought to the mother prioress, desiring her immediate attendance in the parlour. She there found a man who had come in great haste, from the surrounding woods, to tell her that a long file of carriages was proceeding towards the house, and that multitudes of armed horsemen appeared on the neighbouring heights.

A moment after, arrived M. d'Argenson, counsellor of state, and with him a lieutenant of police, accompanied by two commissioners, and other gentlemen; with a band of constables and archers on horseback. On entering, he ordered the key of the outer door to be given to a sentry, whom he established there. He also posted an archer at the door of the turn; one at the door of the church, and so on in other places, where there was any communication with the interior of the convent.

Presently there appeared on the wooded heights, which enclose the beautiful valley of Port Royal, troops of horsemen, amounting to some hundreds; and instantly the whole wall of enclosure was invested by armed men. All the avenues of approach, to the distance of half a league, were guarded by archers on horseback, the greatest part of whom, had in truth arrived the day before; at which time this expedition was originally intended to have been undertaken; but the weather was so unusually stormy,

and the rain so violent and uninterrupted, that M. d'Argenson was obliged to remain at Paris, and defer it until the following day.

The horsemen, having received orders to keep their march a profound secret, and on no account to approach the monastery, found themselves not a little embarrassed as to how they were to pass the night. They were compelled to disperse in various directions; some went to Magny, others found asylums for the night at Montigny, Voisins, and Chevreuse, and some had to go even as far as Dampierre; while very many of them, not being able to obtain shelter, were compelled to remain concealed all night in the woods about Port Royal, drenched with rain, and exposed to the fury of the storm.

Having posted his sentinels, M. d'Argenson stopped all the servants he met; took down their respective names and offices, and commanded them not to stir from the place he appointed for them. He then went to the turn, and asked to speak to the prioress, and procuratrix.\* Being conducted to the great parlour, the parties summoned immediately appeared at the grate; upon which M. d'Argenson

\* It may be necessary to observe to our protestant readers, that the office of *Procuratrix* is much like that of the housekeeper in a large family; or perhaps more like a union of the offices of steward and housekeeper. It is the person who keeps the stores, dispenses them in the interior of the convent, and transacts the business of the community.

mentioned his name, and told them that he came authorized by his Majesty. He read to them the beginning only of the decree he came to execute; which was dated three days before, namely, on the twenty-sixth of October, and which required of the nuns, to open their door to M. d'Argenson, and to deliver up to him, all their papers and title deeds. He then, in the King's name, demanded admission, to fulfil his orders. The prioress replied, that she would immediately open the door of enclosure; and she went to the turn herself to receive him. Having obtained entrance, accompanied by the two commissioners, and followed by a secretary, who carried a little tin box, he desired to be conducted to the chapter-house, and ordered the whole community to be summoned. All the nuns with their veils let down immediately made their appearance. He counted over their number several times; and then placing himself on the abbess's throne, the commissioners taking their seats on either side, he rehearsed to the community at large, so much of the decree as had been previously read to the prioress; and added, that the further pleasure of the King should be made known to them, after the article already recited, should have been complied with.

Having asked if any of their deeds had been taken away or concealed, the prioress answered in the negative, and said that if he would accompany

her to the place where they were kept, she would deliver them up to him. He was then conducted to the strong closet, in which were the title deeds and archives of the monastery, to which he affixed his seal, as well as to several heavy chests, and to the strong box. During this proceeding, only the prioress, sub-prioress, and procuratrix were present; for the nuns hearing the hour of tierce strike, had left the chapter-house, and were gone into the choir. Little did they suspect, that it was the very last time they should ever meet there to celebrate the praises of GOD. As it was Tuesday, it so happened that the psalm for the day was the 25th. "To thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," &c., than which one more appropriate to the peculiarity of their circumstances could not have been found.

Another singular coincidence also happened on the same day. The two lamps of the dormitory, which had burnt without interruption from the re-establishment of the monastery, were unaccountably extinguished, which had never once happened before. After tierce, the nuns retired to their various obediences, or to their cells, which they had scarcely reached before M. d'Argenson, having returned to the chapter-house, recalled the community. When they were all assembled, both choir-nuns and lay-sisters; he told them he had reason to congratulate them on the prompt submission with which they



had obeyed the King's command; but that he was now reluctantly constrained to declare the further orders of his majesty — orders which were much more painful and rigorous than those they had already submitted to, and which would require, on their part, infinitely greater sacrifices, but which, nevertheless, must be absolutely obeyed. He then commanded the remainder of the decree to be read; which declared “ that the King, for several reasons, on mature deliberation, and for the good of the state, ordered all the nuns of Port Royal des Champs to be immediately separated from each other, and dispersed in different religious houses out of the diocese of Paris.”

After a pause, the prioress said, that at least she had hoped they would have been sent two and two, being mostly aged and infirm. He replied that could not be. After another pause, the prioress asked, how long a period would be allowed them to prepare for such a journey, in such an inclement season of the year, and for their last and final separation. He answered that their separation must take place without delay. Some of the nuns replied, that they had scarcely had time to go to their cells since mass, and that it would unavoidably take some time to put up what was indispensably necessary for their journey.

With much difficulty, M. d'Argenson was pre-

vailed upon to allow them half a quarter of an hour for their preparation; but added, that he should follow them to see that they carried away no papers. He then opened the box brought by the secretary, from which he took a paper, containing a list of the various places of their exile, and a number of double packets, ticketed, containing money to defray the expense of the journey of each nun; and another sum to pay her first quarter's board, in the convent where she was to be placed. M. d'Argenson assigned Blois to the mère prioress; and then filled up the other blanks, applying to her for the names of the different nuns.

The community meanwhile stood around, listening to their sentences in profound silence, still keeping their large black veils let down over their faces. Neither sigh nor murmur was heard, nor did one weak tear appear to betray the dignity of their constancy, or to impeach the perfect humility of their resignation and submission to the divine will.

One indeed fainted, and another who had been bled the day before, felt her arm open; but M. d'Argenson would not suffer either of them for an instant to quit the room, till he had narrowly examined whether there were any imposture.

At length it became necessary for the nuns to go to make up their packages. Each of these, as it was tied up, was brought into the chapter-house and

ticketed, M. d'Argenson, in the meantime, standing in the passage to the dormitory, in order to inspect the contents of every bundle as it was handed out. The nuns thus shamefully and cruelly hurried, had not time to take one half of what was absolutely necessary; and during the examination, several of the packets were so unsorted and mixed, that not a few went to the wrong places.

M. d'Argenson having finished his examination, asked the procuratrix for her accounts. Then the nuns, who in their own extremity, forgot not their wonted beneficence, spoke to him of their old servants, most of whom had long and faithfully served them, from early youth even to hoary hairs. They also recommended to him the poor, as well as some aged domestics and others, who being past labour, were maintained by the house; the prioress asking him how he proposed to provide for their latter days? M. d'Argenson replied, "that it was vexatious, but it would be time enough to consider about that, when they were gone." Saying this, he took the keys of enclosure, and put them into the hands of an archer; he re-entered the chapter-house, followed by a troop of bailiffs and archers, amounting to above thirty, who with those already there, completely filled the room.

Besides these, there were others in the outer court guarding the servants, in all — without counting the

numbers who invested the whole wall of enclosure, the hills, and all the avenues of approach — there were nearly three hundred men armed and mounted, merely to disperse a few nuns.

Seeing they were now to quit their beloved seclusion — no human help being at hand, no pitying eye turned towards them, and the archers and bailiffs thronging in to disperse them — some of the nuns, approaching their prioress, said to her, “What, my dear mother! shall we quit our home without once protesting, or making any legal act of appeal?” She replied, “My dear daughters, as all is done by the authority of *lettres-de-cachets*, there remains no legal power of appeal. Our duty is clear, and that is to submit with resignation.” They then with one accord, threw themselves at her feet to implore her blessing, tenderly embraced her, and said no more.

During this time, M. d’Argenson was busily occupied in giving the necessary orders for their speedy departure. It was now near one o’clock, and not any of the community had yet broken their fast. The prioress represented this to the magistrate, and asked him whether it would not be well for them to go a few minutes into the refectory. “No, no,” replied he, “but you can bring something here.” Some bread and wine were then brought into the chapter-house; but nobody would touch it except one nun, whom M. d’Argenson absolutely constrained

to take some, as she was evidently in the most urgent want of it.

Till this time the carriages had remained without. The lieutenant of police then gave the order that they should drive in; and the court was immediately full of carriages, archers, soldiers, and bailiffs.

Meanwhile, all the surrounding villages and neighbourhood had been alarmed at so unusual a movement. The farmers, villagers, cottagers, and poor, were eagerly watching in silence, and at a distance, the issue of this alarming procedure; so that the heights of the surrounding hills were thronged with an immense concourse of all ages and descriptions, more especially by the poor, who for above a century had been supported by the charity of Port Royal. But no sooner were the empty carriages seen driving into the yard, than one universal cry of sorrow and indignation burst from the assembled multitude. The poor rushed down in troops; some weeping aloud, and crying that they were about to be deprived of their nursing mothers, and beseeching that they might be left; others eagerly thronging around the nuns to behold their faces once more; some screaming dreadfully, in the utmost anguish of distress; others silently throwing themselves on their knees, and looking up to heaven, as though to call for aid: others again, with mournful cries and frantic gestures, shrieking, "Mercy, mercy, have mercy on the

poor! do you intend to destroy the poor, by taking away their only friends?"

Their tears and lamentations, however, were alike disregarded. The cruel moment of separation arrived, and the nuns were compelled to enter the carriages which were waiting to receive them. The prioress, with a calmness and resignation which was the gift of GOD, lost not for a moment her presence of mind. No mark of weakness escaped her. She stayed till the last; and as M. d'Argenson himself led each nun to the carriage, she gave to each her last blessing, and a word of exhortation and consolation.

Carriage after carriage then filed off, each with an armed escort, through the lines of poor, who, loudly sobbing, bade them farewell with frantic grief; or kneeling, with uplifted and streaming eyes, implored a blessing upon them. Twelve carriages thus successively departed, destined to Blois, Rouen, Chartres, Mantes, Meaux, Amiens, Compiègne, Autun, Mont Cénis, and other places.

All the servants, who had been detained captive throughout the day, were then turned out of doors without provision, shelter, or reward. To one very aged man, indeed, who had faithfully served the nuns gratuitously, they gave *twenty-five pence* — a poor remuneration for fifty years' service. .

We will now follow the nuns to their various



exiles. The first carriage which was despatched was that of Autun. It conveyed the Sœur Sainte Sophie de Flescelles, and Sœur Lucie de St. Pepin. The former, on stepping into the carriage, bade one more adieu to her sisters, saying, "My dear sisters, let us above all arm ourselves with the invincible shield of faith, which is able to quench every fiery dart." The wife of one of the bailiffs who accompanied them by way of attendant and guard, declared, that, instead of letting drop one single murmuring word, the nuns immediately disposed themselves to prayer. They experienced many inconveniences on the road, not only from the hardships necessarily attendant on the severity of the season, but from the rigour of M. d'Argenson's orders; amongst others, they were refused attendance on divine worship, and on their arrival at the inns, they were immediately put under lock and key. In reply to the rudeness with which the guards, who accompanied the carriage, performed their office, the Sœur Lucie de St. Pepin mildly answered, "My Saviour has been a prisoner before me, and that for our salvation: I bless GOD for vouchsafing me the favour of having any, even the least, part in His lot, or fellowship with Him in His sufferings."

At length they arrived at the monastery of the visitation, where the Sœur Lucie de St. Pepin was

to stay, and where those who received her as a prisoner, soon learnt to honour her as a saint.

The next day, the two nuns had a painful sacrifice to make, in finally separating from each other, as the Sœur Sainte Sophie de Flescelles was going on farther to Mont Cénis.

They took the most affectionate and affecting leave of each other, as persons expecting to meet no more on this side of eternity; and solemnly exhorted each other to be faithful even to the end. They then separated; the Sœur Sophie continuing her journey to Mont Cénis, where, after passing through many trials and vexations, Madame de Rosebureau, the abbess, declared "that Providence had bestowed on them His best gift, in the example of their dear sister of Port Royal, whose conduct had been a source of edification to the whole house."

Two other carriages proceeded to St. Denis, with lay-sisters, who were however almost immediately translated to other convents. The hardships, maltreatment, and anxiety these nuns underwent, joined to their advanced age, and the inclemency of the season, occasioned the death of the greater part of them, in a very short period. Others lived several years, setting a bright example of Christian and monastic virtues, and after undergoing various persecutions, died in the odour of sanctity, leaving their

memories in benediction, in the very houses in which they had endured their captivity.

The fourth carriage departed for Amiens. It contained the Sœur Anne de St. Cécile de Boiscervoise, aged eighty-one years, and Sœur Magdelène de St. Cécile Bertrand. The first of these nuns was amongst the number of those who were imprisoned forty-one years before, in the persecution of 1664. She had accompanied the abbess, Madame Ligny, in her banishment, and having already experienced the hardships of exile, she had peculiarly feared the dispersion. Owing to the badness of the weather, the roads were almost unpassable; and after great inconvenience, the carriage was finally overturned, and the nuns were very much hurt. The Sœur Anne de St. Cécile was taken exceedingly ill in consequence of her fatigue. They arrived late in the evening on the 20th at Amiens. A physician was sent for at eleven that night, as the nun appeared in the most urgent extremity; she however lived four days longer; when, amidst the continued persecutions with which she was assailed on her death-bed, she expired in perfect peace, trusting in the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ.

On the last day of her life, Madame de Boiscervoise called for her breviary; and taking out of it a little print of the great and good Arnould, she looked at it, and then put it into the fire, carefully

watching till it was entirely consumed. "I always have honoured M. Arnauld," she then said to her jailers: "I entertain to my last moments for his memory the high respect and consideration he deserves; and if I now burn his portrait, it is not that my views are altered, but as a necessary precaution lest it should fall into unworthy hands!"

Next to the carriages for Amiens, succeeded two for Chartres. The Sœur Agathe le Juge, who was one of the occupants, having been lately bled, was extremely weak, and the agitation she had undergone, made her so ill, that she was unable to stand; she was carried into the coach, and supported by pillows. There were also two lay sisters sent to Chartres; one of whom was a cripple who had passed many years without wearing shoes or stockings, and had restricted herself in food, in order to be able to give more to the poor. She was so exceedingly ill that she was obliged to be put into the carriage wrapped up in a blanket, and she scarcely lived to reach the place of her destination.

The seventh carriage was sent to Nevers, containing Sœur Françoise Magdelène de St. Ide Vavaseur, and Sœur Marie de St. Anne Courturier, who were placed in separate convents of the Ursulines. This carriage was overturned, and rolled over into a kind of morass; and the nuns were dreadfully bruised. When dragged out of the slough they were so

covered with mud, as to be obliged to strip off their nuns' dresses and to put on secular clothes. They reached their destination at a very late hour, but such was the prejudice entertained against them, that it was a considerable time before the abbesses would admit them.

There were still four carriages to go. The first to Rouen, which was to convey the Sœur Anne Julie de St. Synclétique de Rémicourt, the sub-prioress of Port Royal, to the priory of Bellefond, of the order of St. Bennett. But here the aversion to the nuns of Port Royal was so great, that when she arrived, they would not open the doors; so that after a most fatiguing and anxious journey, in the midst of November, the carriage was obliged to wait in the night for some hours, till at length M. d'Aubigné, archbishop of Rouen, being applied to, sent word to the abbess, that she and her community could not possibly dispense with obeying the King's commands.

The abbess Madame de St. Pierre, notwithstanding her ill-will and reluctance, was thus compelled to admit Madame de Rémicourt, but instead of receiving her into the convent, she immediately placed her under lock and key in a small garden-house, separated from the rest of the monastery. Here she was so closely confined, that for years she only saw the lay-sister who fed her. No nun was allowed to speak to her. She was deprived of all public offices

of worship, and wholly interdicted the use of books, and writing materials; and, horrible to relate, she was neither allowed fire nor candle throughout the severest winter France had experienced for two whole centuries: nor was there any inlet for fresh air, except through the chimney. Still, however, her faith failed not. It was of this nun that the archbishop said to the abbess, Madame de St Pierre, "You may persecute, but you never will alter Madame de Rémicourt; she has a square head, and persons with square heads are always obstinate and decided."

The lay-sister who attended this truly magnanimous and saintly sub-prioress, sincerely pitied her, but durst not bring her any fuel from the kitchen to alleviate her sufferings; she, however, entreated the boarders in the convent, and the scholars, to put out the charcoal of their stoves before it was quite burnt, and to give it to her. This she did, without telling the young ladies what she meant to do with it. They concluded she meant to give it to the poor; but they soon found out the use to which this compassionate nun applied it; as she was discovered by the abbess, and obliged to do penance for her humanity.

Shortly after this occurrence, the abbess came down one day at the hour of recreation, and while conversing very familiarly with the scholars, she began to exalt the advantages and delights of the



monastic state, and then asked them whether they should not like to be nuns in her convent? Most of the scholars answered according to the wishes of the abbess; but one young lady, about fifteen, who afterwards proved a very eminent and devoted Christian, answered with great decision, "No, madam, I would not on any account enter this convent." "And pray why, my dear sister?" inquired the abbess. "Because madam," returned the young lady, "both yourself and your nuns are totally deficient in Christian charity." The abbess, astonished, demanded an explanation. The young lady then pointing to the prison of the sub-prioress of Port Royal, said to her — "There is in that prison a nun, who has been confined for a long time, who is never admitted to the consolations of public worship; who receives no visits of charity or compassion; who is never seen but by the lay-sister who feeds her, and who is never allowed to come out for a single moment to take the air." "Even the wild beasts," continued the young lady, "have their different apartments, that they may be aired by their keepers, who exhibit them; but you, madam, a nun, a religious in profession, refuse this indulgence to a human being. Moreover, this nun has been totally deprived of fire during the whole winter, which has been very long, and of unexampled severity." "Pray, how do you know that?"

inquired the abbess. "Because madam," replied the young lady, "fire cannot burn without smoke; and no smoke has been seen to issue during the whole of this severe winter from the chimney of that prison. In short, madam, you will, I am persuaded, find it difficult to produce an instance of a barbarian or of a heathen who ever treated his captive enemy as you, madam, a native of the most civilised nation in the world, and a professor of the Christian religion, have treated a lady, your country-woman by birth, your superior by rank, your sister by religious profession, and, madam, your example by sanctity; for assuredly a very eminent degree of sanctity alone could have preserved this lady under an excess of inhumanity, which would have driven any merely common religious professor to despair."

The abbess completely abashed, and severely mortified, in vain endeavoured to excuse herself; alleging the royal mandate and the authority of the archbishop. But all the rest of the scholars now taking part with the young lady, the abbess, utterly confounded, was obliged to withdraw. Next day she gave the imprisoned sub-prioress leave to walk out for an hour, at the time of the recreation, with the young ladies. The permission was continued, and leave was also given to have a fire, and to attend divine service, though in a tribune alone.

Thus, whilst M. de Noailles, a cardinal of the

holy college, and the archbishop of the metropolitan church, through the most culpable and despicable weakness, suffered religion to be trampled under foot; a mere child, by firmly espousing the side of religion and humanity, had the consolation of being the happy instrument of mitigating the sufferings of a saint, and of assuaging the miseries which the cruel spirit of persecution glories in inflicting.

Madame de Rémicourt was afterwards treated with less inhuman severity, though she did not obtain more liberty.

The carriages for Rouen, were succeeded by one for Compiègne, conveying the Sœurs Appolline le Begue, and another nun, who were placed in two religious houses, under the immediate direction of the Jesuits, from whom they suffered most grievously. Wearied at length with tormenting them, one of their directors voluntarily declared, "that in all cases they showed such an humble fear of displeasing GOD, that for his part he could not but bitterly regret the destruction of a house whose inmates were so eminently holy."

Then followed a carriage to Meaux, conveying the Sœur Marie de St. Catherine Issali, procuratrix of Port Royal, and the Sœur Marie Catherine St. Celinie Bénoise. The first was a great sufferer, from a dislocation of both hips. She could neither kneel nor rise without assistance; but such was her

benevolence, that she used to cause herself to be carried to a couch near a table, where she busied herself from morning till night, with indefatigable industry, making clothes for the poor, mixing up medicines and ointments for the sick, and bleeding those who required it, with the greatest dexterity. When this sister arrived, neither her grievous infirmity, nor the hardships she had in consequence suffered on her journey, could induce the convent to show her the humanity of taking her in ; it was only by a positive order from the bishop that she was at length admitted into a society, from which she had to experience the harshest treatment.

Last of all, and not much before five o'clock in the evening, the carriage for Blois left Port Royal, conveying the reverend mère prioress, Louise de St. Anastasie Mesnil de Courtiaux, and the Sœur Françoise Agnès de St. Marthe. The destination of the first was to the Ursulines of Blois ; that of the latter, to the Canonesses of the same city. During the whole of the afflicting scene she had witnessed, the reverend mère prioress had exhibited the deep feeling of the mother of a large community, the resignation of a truly disciplined Christian, and a dignity of mind and force of character peculiarly her own. Every nun, before she entered the carriage, had first devoutly knelt at the foot of the

altar, and there offered herself unreservedly as a sacrifice to her Lord, then afterwards returning to the chapter, had thrown herself at the feet of the prioress, to ask her blessing.

However sensibly the reverend mother felt these adieus, she supported them with the same dignity and fortitude to the end. She most tenderly embraced each of the nuns, and then, not to distress them unnecessarily, she only said, "My very dear sisters, be faithful to your rule, to your conscience, and to your GOD, who is able to support you throughout the most fiery trials you may be called upon to pass." The nuns, on the other hand, with many tears, but with great recollectedness, bid her and each other a final adieu, till they should meet in a blissful eternity; they asked pardon of each other, for any offence or pain they might have mutually given; and animating each other with the liveliest incitements that religion can supply, they recommended themselves to their mother's and to each other's prayers, declaring, that being united in Christ, in heart, and for GOD, they could not fail to find Port Royal, and Him, who was the life and glory of Port Royal, everywhere. When the Sœur Isalli, the procuratrix, was going, she remembered that on settling the accounts, the convent had still four hundred francs in hand; she therefore desired that this sum might be given to the poor; but the archers having

seized the purse divided its contents amongst themselves.

Even M. d'Argenson appeared impressed and even touched by the conduct of the prioress. He treated her with the greatest respect, always styling her the reverend mother, and appointed the Provost of the Maréchaussée himself, with six horsemen, to accompany her carriage, and repeatedly desired him to show her every possible respect and attention. Indeed the whole company were evidently impressed by a demeanor which evinced such unshaken firmness, and yet such profound submission to orders so cruelly rigorous and unjust. Like the venerable mother of the Maccabees, her courage never once failed throughout that terrible day, in which her beloved children were severed from her. As it was so late in the evening when she reached Versailles, they lodged there for the night, and it was not until the 4th of November that both the prisoners arrived at Blois. Being early in the day, M. d'Auvergne, the Provost of the Maréchaussée, wished to send them immediately to the convents to which they were respectively consigned. But at their earnest request, the favour of spending a few hours more together before their final separation, was kindly conceded. The rest of the evening and that night they chiefly spent in prayer, and in exhorting each other to resignation and constancy.



The next day the prioress accompanied Sœur Françoise de St. Marthe to her convent of the Veronicans, before she went to her own. Here, after a short conversation, the prioress rose to take her final leave. The Sœur de St. Marthe threw herself at the prioress's feet and implored her last benediction. The prioress gave it in the most solemn and affecting manner. She then raised her up, and most affectionately embracing her, bade her a last farewell, and gave her this parting exhortation, "Be thou faithful unto death, and He will give thee a crown of life." In this manner they separated, never to meet again in this world.

The mère prioress was then conducted to the Ursulines, where she was closely guarded and imprisoned, but where her unshaken constancy and eminent piety at length extorted the highest esteem, veneration, and admiration of the whole community, but without leading to any abatement of the rigorous treatment they made her endure, till death put her in possession of the crown of life laid up for those who are faithful to the end.

The last nun at Port Royal was the Sœur Marie St. Euphrasie Robert; she was paralytic, and this together with her extreme age, (for she was almost ninety) had not only deprived her of the powers of reading, writing, and walking, but even of the use of her reason. It was even thought that she had too

little consciousness, to be sensible of what was going on at the time of the dispersion. To their great surprise, however, whilst to all appearance stupidly gazing on the scene before her, she suddenly raised her head, and, turning to M. d'Argenson, mildly but firmly said, "Sir, to-day is the hour of man; but that of the judgment of GOD will soon, and certainly arrive."

She was sent away the next morning, but suffered so severely on her journey, that her death was expected on the day of her arrival at the place of her destination; she, however, survived it a few weeks.

The servants of Port Royal met with no better treatment than the nuns. No sooner was the prioress gone, than M. d'Argenson began to dismiss them, after being detained close prisoners during the whole day. In vain did they represent to him, that it was now evening; that there was scarcely half an hour's day-light, and that they did not know where to go. It availed them nothing; they were turned out that night, and obliged to go where they could, and to seek shelter in the villages around.

The next day the servants returned for their clothes and their own furniture; but all their packets had been visited, and they were only able to take what the rapacity of the archers allowed them; this indeed was not much; even their books of devotion were taken from them, the soldiers

without scruple treated them as thieves, telling them in the most opprobrious language, that they must have stolen them from the nuns.

Several of the most aged and faithful having outlived their relatives, and being past labour, were compelled to seek a miserable shelter at the Hôtel Dieu. Here they were respected as persons whose eminent piety sufficiently declared the school in which they had been educated. They indeed had to endure the miseries of poverty, but they died in sanctity amongst the poor, after having spent a life of holiness among GOD's saints.

Such was the close of the monastery of Port Royal des Champs. Thus the house, so eminently blessed by GOD, was sacrilegiously desolated — the house, which for more than a century, had diffused the odour of a divine life throughout the Christian church, and the word of GOD throughout the land — an institution, which in its existence, exhibited a pattern of holiness; in its destruction, an example of martyrdom. What shall we say? GOD raised up this rare assemblage of virtues and talents in an age which was not worthy of it. He bid it arise like a great light, in a land which sat in great darkness and in the shadow of death; but men preferred darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. He therefore removed their candlestick in wrath from a perverse generation; and mayhap, in per-

mitting Port Royal to be immolated to the faith, He preserved it from that relaxation, which often succeeds to a revival of religion, and brings reproach upon the cause of GOD. Port Royal is no more; but its memory is in benediction; and its works shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Thus the permission of GOD, even in such an afflicting and mysterious event as this, which is inscrutable to flesh and blood, is considered by the eye of faith, as the very summit and crown of GOD's mercies to His holy institution.

To return to our narrative. M. d'Argenson sent a special messenger to Versailles, to inform the King and Madame de Maintenon (who was the prime mover in this affair) that the desolation which he had been commissioned to accomplish was completed.

M. d'Argenson himself remained some time at Port Royal to arrange all business relating to it. Whilst he was there, the monastery was completely ransacked by an ecclesiastic, who was brother to the Bishop of Bellay. He pried into every corner, and emptied all the drawers, chests, and closets, turning out their contents on the floor. All the obediences\*

\* Obedience is the name given to those rooms containing the materials for the different kinds of works in which nuns are employed. And as the community had formerly been so numerous, there were a great many of these obediences at Port Royal. As for example, obediences for the linen, the robbery, the mattresses, the bedding, the furniture, the drugs, the apothecary's shop, the church

were likewise put into the greatest disorder, and the whole house was thrown open to be pillaged.

The new comers being unacquainted with the keys, by way of saving time, burst open the doors, and forced open the closets, in quest of spoil to gratify their rapacity; and in the indecency of their research, they did not even refrain from perpetrating the unheard of outrage of prying into the apartments of secular persons, who boarded in the private rooms of the convent.

Not long after, the monastery underwent a second pillage. Madame de Château Rénaud, the usurping abbess of Port Royal de Paris, came in the beginning of December to seize upon the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, and took away the provisions, clothes, furniture, and church ornaments.

The provisions were considerable, because the nuns were in the habit of laying in large supplies, in the seasons in which they were abundant and consequently cheap; so great was the spirit of order and economy for which this house was distinguished, in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. As it happened to be the time for laying in a stock of wax,

ornaments and vestments, the fruitery, the locksmith's, the shoe warehouse, the weaving looms; obediences for glazing, for oil, for wax, for candles, for the library, for book-binding, for book-mending, for the clothes of the poor, and for the clothes of poor children under seven years old.

there was likewise a very great quantity of it, and also of candles, potted butter, prunes, grains, eggs, olive oil, nut oil, salt, and firewood. All the linen of the noviciate remained, as well as a large quantity of coverlets, mattresses, nuns' robes, sewing-thread, packthread, millpuff for mattresses, and white stuff for stockings. There was likewise a very fine piece of Gobelin tapestry, presented to them by Mademoiselle des Vertus, to serve at the procession of the holy sacrament.

The usurping abbess remained three weeks at Port Royal, during which time she sent to the house at Paris above an hundred cartloads of effects and provisions, that remained after the first pillage, besides what was sold on the spot.

Shortly after the monastery had been thus completely pillaged, Madame de Château Rénaud obtained, through the influence of Madame de Maintenon, a decree of the 12th of January, 1710, ordering the total demolition of the house, which, exclusive of the church, had cost above 65,625 livres.

This most infamous decree, however, was not carried into effect until the succeeding year; when indeed it was executed with such vindictive malice, that it might almost be said of Port Royal, as of Jerusalem of old, that not one stone was left upon another.

Before the destruction of the monastery, M. d'Ar-



genson learnt that Mademoiselle Horthmels, the daughter to a bookseller in Paris, had engraved a series of plates, representing the church, choir, refectory, cloisters, and various other views of Port Royal des Champs. He immediately sent and had all the impressions seized, as well as the copper-plates from which they had been worked off. Whereupon the mother of the artist laid a complaint before the magistrate; but he decided that his Majesty having ordered the demolition of the monastery, no representation of it should have been taken or preserved.

The church of Port Royal had not been included in the decree for the demolition of the house; but about the end of 1710, another decree was obtained, for the complete destruction of all that remained. In the year 1711, accordingly, the church was also destroyed; and the exhumation of the bodies took place at the end of the same year, and in the beginning of 1712.

In the interval which elapsed between the destruction of the monastery and the exhumation, several families, to protect the remains of their friends from outrage, sought, and obtained permission, to remove the bodies of their relatives, interred at Port Royal des Champs, and to give them a private, but decent burial elsewhere. Accordingly six bodies of the Arnauld family, and also that of M. de Tillemont, M. Racine, those of Messrs. Le Maitre, De Saci, and a

very few more, were transported to other resting places.

The multitude of bodies, however, which still remained at Port Royal des Champs, continued undisturbed till the end of 1711. At that period the Cardinal de Noailles committed the superintendence of the exhumation to an ecclesiastic of the name of Le Doux; who acquitted himself of his commission in the most shameful and scandalous manner. The operation, far from being conducted with the respect due to the sanctity of the deceased, or even with the commonest decency, was committed to a set of labourers and gravediggers, of the most profligate description, who prepared themselves by intoxication, for the disagreeable task they had undertaken. During the progress of the exhumation, they were in a fearful state of drunken excitement; and the horrible work was carried on with the most scandalous indecency, amidst the most profligate jests, vociferation, and blasphemy. The bodies had been interred in various places: some in the body of the church, others in the choir, many in the cloisters, a great number in the external churchyard, whilst others reposed in the internal burying ground, which was more particularly appropriated to the nuns. The tombs were opened in all these different places, and the bones were taken out and carried to the chapter-house. Some of the bodies were entirely decayed, others only partially,

many remained entire, and these, the gravediggers seldom took the trouble to dig up whole, but hacking and hewing them in pieces, tore off the flesh and mangled limbs piecemeal, throwing them into one vast heap, where the decayed bones, the putrid and dissolving corpses, and the mangled limbs and remains, were promiscuously piled together, in one vast charnel, in order to be afterwards transported in carts elsewhere.

A great proportion of bodies were entire; of this number there were three which, even to their very dress, remained as when they were committed to the grave. One was that of a priest in his sacerdotal vestments; another that of Laisné, a servant to the house, who died about two years before; and the third was that of the Mère Boulard de Ninvillers, the last abbess of Port Royal, who died in the year 1706.

On these sacred remains the most revolting and infamous brutality was exercised. The gravediggers in drunken madness making use of the most indecent language which could outrage the common feelings of humanity, and uttering the most horrible and blasphemous imprecations, were hewing off the limbs and heads of the sacred bodies of these blessed saints with their spades or pickaxes, in order to compress them piecemeal into some old packing cases, and then dragging them along to the chapter, where they were thrown into the common heap. Two gen-

tlemen, who were hunting in the woods of Port Royal, happened to pass by at the time these brutalities were perpetrating; curiosity led them to turn aside to see what was going forward. On entering the church, they saw a body exhumated, as entire as if it had been only newly buried. It was dressed in a surplice, between the hands was placed a small wooden crucifix, a divine peace still sat upon the countenance. The gravediggers instantly stripped it, dragged it by the feet the whole length of the church to the chapter-house; and then with bars and pickaxes they hacked the body in pieces, and defaced that venerable countenance which even death had respected.

The body of Madame Boulard, the last abbess, appeared like one in a tranquil sleep; or as it has been described, her face wore still the placidity of Christian benignity, amid the deep solemnity of death. When that of Jean Laisné was found, the workmen recognising him to whose kindness they, as well as the other poor, had often been indebted; brutally exclaimed, "Ah, ah, Laisné, so there thou art again!" But we must draw a veil over the scene of horrors that ensued.

We shall simply say, their bodies were at length transported to the common heap. The bare idea of such a spectacle outrages both religion and nature itself. What must the eyewitnesses have felt at be-

holding this immense pile—the mangled and putrescent bodies of above three thousand corpses, which it was computed were buried there—promiscuously heaped together! Indeed, the number is not exaggerated. Since the reform only, which had then subsisted above a century, there were generally a hundred nuns in the house, besides priests, recluses, and servants; all of whom had been interred in those sacred precincts, besides a vast multitude of pious friends who also were buried there. Such were the venerable characters, whose remains were thus cast out with cruel and shameless indignity; whilst numbers of hungry dogs, attracted by the horrible and pestilential gales, which blew over this scene of carnage, were seen on all sides assembling round the gravediggers, tearing the putrid flesh, snarling and contending for the mangled limbs, or foul and besmeared with gore, gnawing the bones, or sleeping, gluttoned, amidst their prey.

Such was the mode, in which the exhumation of the bodies of the saints of Port Royal was conducted. When it was finished, they transported this vast mass of human remains to the church of St. Lambert; where one large grave, or rather pit, was dug, into which they were promiscuously thrown. To complete the scandalous indecency of this most horrible transaction, it is related, that in the jolting of the carts, which were piled up very high, many of their

contents occasionally tumbled out, so that the road from Port Royal to St. Lambert, might be traced by the torn remnants of human bodies, scattered along the whole length of the way. The piety of passengers and the surrounding villagers, gave to these remains a burial, on the very parts of the road where they had happened to fall. The pit into which the rest of the bodies were thrown, was dug on the south side of the church of St. Lambert. At each corner was placed a large stone, separating it from the rest of the churchyard; and in the centre was placed another, on which the friends of Port Royal erected a wooden cross, the only mark of respect they were permitted to show.

This cross, however, was very soon obliged to be renewed. The young, whom the saints of Port Royal had instructed; the old, whom they had consoled; the poor, they had helped; and the friends, whom in the slippery paths of worldly greatness, they had guided; all were frequent visitors to the desolate remains of Port Royal, and to the churchyard of St. Lambert. Excluded from the church by the ecclesiastic who officiated, the churchyard and the site of the monastery became places of meditation and prayer; and few resorted to these sacred spots, without taking away with them some fragment of the ruins of Port Royal, or a small piece of the cross erected over the remains of her saints. Truly might it have been said at that period,



“Thy servants think upon her stones; her very dust is precious in their eyes.” But, alas! in later times, many of the tomb-stones of the nuns, which were either of black marble or of lias stone, have been discovered in taverns and smoking houses of the lowest description, for several leagues round Port Royal; where they have been used either for pavement, or for drinking tables. A magistrate, well known for his piety, had the devotion to save one of them from profanation. Having found it in the yard of an inn, where it had not yet been used, he purchased it, and kept it as a sad but sacred memorial of the saints of Port Royal.

Soon after the exhumation, the walls of the church of Port Royal were blown up with gunpowder, and the timber and carpenter’s work torn down, and sold to the best bidder. Truly might it be said of these cruel persecutors, that not content with devouring Jacob, they had filled his dwelling place with desolation. Not long after this, the archbishop of Beaumont tore up almost the very last remnants of the monastery; and to blot out all remembrance of a spot whose light had gone forth to the whole world, and whose good works had left an indelible impression on the hearts of men, he used the principal part of the stone-work of the building in making an aqueduct. Thus may the fury of the enemies of Port Royal be (as it has often been) compared to that of the children

of Edom against Jerusalem. "O GOD! the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the land."—*Psalms lxxix.* "They said, down with Jerusalem! down with it even to the ground."

Such was the untimely fate of the celebrated monastery of Port Royal; but in vain was the voice of ecclesiastical authority raised to defend the deed it had urged the temporal power, and obtained the regal sanction, to perpetrate. One universal voice of execration arose from every quarter; and all France looked with abhorrence upon an outrage which not only stigmatised the professors of religion who had planned it, but degraded the royal prerogative which had been so overstretched and abused, by authorising its execution. And whilst so intolerant a bigotry, and so arbitrary an exercise of power, was looked upon with horror by the vast body of the truly religious in the Gallican church, and by the truly enlightened in all countries, the superstitious did not fail to observe, that this event was succeeded by a period of immediate, sudden, and almost unexampled disasters to France. Scarcely had the monarch, who sat on the throne, demolished Port Royal, when that throne, firm as it then appeared, was shaken to

its very foundation,—the Grand Dauphin, the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy, the Duke of Brittany, the three successive heirs to the crown, were struck by death, sudden, awful, and inexplicable; and France was left with an aged and decrepid old man at her head, surrounded by triumphant enemies. The victories of Hochstet, Ramillies, and Malplaquet, rapidly succeeded each other; Tournay, Lisle, Mons, and Douay, opened their gates to the enemy. Louis the Fourteenth, in an evil hour, had, by the intrigues of the ambitious woman he married, lent himself to oppress true religion both in his Protestant subjects, by signing the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and in his Catholic subjects, by the banishment of the saint of Cambray, and the destruction of Port Royal; and he—whose brilliant successes, alike in arts as in arms, in former days, had obtained for him the title of the Great — died, without even leaving to his nation the empty laurels, which might have speciously concealed the miserable poverty to which he had reduced it.

It was also remarked, that, on the day of the exhumation of the bodies, a violent tempest burst upon the district; and that, on the day fixed for the translation of the remains to St. Lambert, a most terrific storm took place; so that their removal was obliged to be deferred for several days. It indeed extended over all France, but was particularly violent in the

district of Versailles and Port Royal, in which all the fruit trees were demolished. It was also observed, that the winter of 1709 was severe and rigorous beyond precedent ; nor did persons fail to conclude this catalogue of disasters by observing, that scarcely had Madame de Château-Rénaud seized the spoil of Port Royal des Champs, than she was struck, in the midst of her pillage, with sudden death. She died without the sacraments ; and if at the last moment, GOD in mercy visited her heavy-laden soul with the grace of repentance, no time was allowed her to manifest its sincerity to men ; nor did she leave any testimony behind her of having been reconciled to GOD ; and both the temporal and spiritual state of her monastery was, at her dissolution, found to be in the greatest possible disorder.

## CHAP. II.

## CAPTIVES.—MADAME DUMESNIL COURTIAUX.

HAVING now pursued the demolition of the monastery to its final stage, it is time to return to the nuns; and, following them in their various retreats, to trace the effects of that faith of which they had been made the blessed partakers, upon the short remnant of their lives.

The captive nuns had, as we before observed, been generally received in the most unworthy manner by the houses to which they had been transferred. They were at first looked upon as lost reprobates, with whom it was dangerous to hold any communication, they were therefore immured in their own cells, under lock and key, debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and excluded from all society; in many instances great personal hardships were added; nevertheless, by degrees they every one without exception, both lay-sisters and choir-nuns, obtained not only the esteem, but the reverence and admiration of their persecutors.

Their unfeigned piety and enlightened devotion

extorted respect from the members of the several communities among whom they were placed ; indeed the same degree of piety they had never before witnessed ; nor had they even a conception of the illumination and information which they so eminently possessed. Their regularity, too, and their exact conformity to the custom of the houses they entered, soon obtained for them the highest consideration ; whilst their unfailing meekness, humility, patience, and resignation, under a long continued persecution, forcibly appealed to their hearts and consciences. In most instances, their persecutors, though blinded by prejudice, were not ill-intentioned ; accustomed to walk by the letter rather than the spirit -- to be guided by external forms and rules rather than by a study of the written Word of GOD, and a spiritual application of it to their hearts—it is no wonder that being unacquainted with “the true light, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world,” they should grope as if they had no eyes, and stumble at noonday as in the night ; and that they should sincerely think they were doing GOD service even while they were persecuting His servants.

When therefore the light of these suffering children of GOD shone before them, they did not shut their eyes against it ; but, seeing their good works, they learned from them to glorify their Father which is in heaven, and to acknowledge, that none but the



children of GOD could thus work the works of GOD. Accordingly, their hearts soon began to change towards them; and at length, as with one accord, all the houses in which they were scattered, not only confessed that they were of a truth the children of GOD, but exalted their eminent piety, and thus their good name went forth into the world. From the depths of their solitary dungeons their light rapidly began to spread abroad; the voice of the people was changed; and the persecuted nuns daily acquired an increasing host of friends, whilst their persecutors, in the plenitude of their power, and in the triumph of their success, became correspondingly odious and detestable. The tide of public opinion no longer fluctuated. The peaceful — nay, the triumphant deaths of a very considerable number of these blessed saints, affixed the seal to a life of good works, terminated amidst unrelenting persecutions. In their happy deaths the voice of GOD spoke to their persecutors, and few, even amongst the most virulent, dared to call in question the solemn and unanswerable sanction of their blissful departure.

Amongst this number, the death of the Sœurs Sophie Flescelles, St. Lucie de Pepin, and that of the Prioress, Madame de Courtiaux, produced a peculiarly deep impression on the public mind. Their native force of character, and their learning, were well known to be only surpassed by their unfeigned piety; nor

could it be concealed—however unwillingly it might be admitted by their persecutors—that their total disapprobation of the required signature was amongst the last and strongest expressions of their dying beds.

Madame de Pepin, who had been transferred successively to several religious houses, was last of all established in the monastery of the regular Canonesses of Picpus, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine. After edifying them, for many years, by her prudence and piety, and by the eminent resignation with which, in addition to her imprisonment, she bore the agonising pain of a cancer for many years, in secret and without complaint, this eminent saint expired in 1720, leaving a memory held in benediction, even amongst those who did not relent from persecuting her on her death-bed. The ladies of Picpus drew up a most edifying, as well as affecting and interesting account of her life and death; and they still preserve, with pious care, a closely written thick quarto work, the fruit of her captivity. This work she had composed upon the Psalms; it is divided into three columns—the first containing the text—the second her own paraphrase—and the third her reflections upon it. During the whole of her ten years' imprisonment, she always went from the choir to her own cell, to employ herself in the study of the scriptures, which was at once her delight and consolation; indeed, the

Christian reader, who endeavours to trace effects to their causes, will scarcely fail to connect the superior piety of Port Royal, with its superiority in scriptural knowledge.

Besides the great variety of translations and illustrations of scripture, which Port Royal was the means of diffusing over Catholic Christendom; and besides the assiduous and daily study of scripture indispensably enjoined on all its disciples; a large proportion of the nuns had studied the dead languages, for the purpose of reading the Word of God in the originals. Nearly all of them read the vulgate fluently, and many were perfectly versed in the Greek and Hebrew originals. Nor did they merely content themselves with the *perusal* of scripture; they were in the practice of learning considerable portions of it by heart. Not only the nuns, but most of the secular scholars, we are informed in the constitutions of Port Royal, knew the whole psalter by heart; and such was the respect in which the sacred writings were held, that whilst they were read daily to the scholars, they listened kneeling, with their hands joined in prayer; in order, says the venerable abbess who is the author of the constitutions, that they might early be taught to pray for the Spirit of God, without whose inspirations we can never understand the Word of God.

But above all, the eyes of France were fixed upon

Madame Louise de Sainte Anastasie du Mesnil Courtiaux, the reverend mother prioress of Port Royal, whom we described as conducting herself with such eminent resignation and constancy at the final dispersion of the nuns. The place of her exile was Blois. For six years she suffered unabated persecution. Debarred from all communication with her friends, either personally or by letter, she was closely immured in a solitary cell, except at the hour of divine service; nor had she either the indulgence of a fire, or the requisites of winter clothing. By the abbess and nuns of the monastery in which she was placed, she was treated as an obstinate and excommunicated heretic, with whom it was dangerous to associate; and by priests, bishops, and confessors, she was almost daily persecuted, threatened, and tormented, to obtain a signature which her conscience forbade her to grant. Her uniform mildness astonished the one, as much as her firmness the other. But so unconscionable and unrelenting were her persecutors, that even on her death-bed, the bishop counselled her to commit an act of perjury, as the only price for which she could obtain a participation in the sacraments of the church.

“My Lord,” replied the dying prioress, “though I value the privilege of participating in the blessed eucharist above life itself; and though it would in this tremendous hour, be my greatest consolation; yet I

have not the ill-understood devotion, to imagine it allowable to wound the Spirit of GOD, in order to participate in the body of Christ." Truly indeed might this saint-like prioress be said to be a partaker in the spirit of her venerable predecessor, the Mère Agnès, who, on a similar occasion, had exhorted her nuns "rather to forego one of the benedictions of GOD, than to lose the favour of the GOD of all benedictions."

The last illness of Madame de Courtiaux lasted six weeks; during which the clergy on the one side and the nuns on the other, beset her dying bed, persecuting and tormenting her with every device that could suggest itself; and exhausting every argument, threat, and insidious persuasion to induce her to sign the formulary. Two days before the close of her life, the bishop, who was as usual standing before her bed, exhorted her to reflect, for she would soon be in the presence of GOD. "My Lord," replied the prioress, "GOD is continually present with His children. It was in His light only, that I ever sought light; it is then because it is His word, and not merely because I have weighed it during a solitude of six years, that I assure you my decision is made. It is because it was made in His presence, that it is not now to be re-made." "But," continued the prelate, after an exhortation of about two hours' length, "who will present you to GOD? it will not be the

church, which you refuse to obey ; nor yet will it be myself, who am the pastor only to the sheep within her fold. What will you do when you have to appear before GOD, bearing the weight of your sins alone ?” The dying nun paused, as if deeply affected ; then fixing on him a mild, but steady eye, replied, “ *Having made peace through the blood of His cross, my Saviour hath reconciled all things unto Himself in the body of His flesh, through death, to present us holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable in His sight ; if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.*” Then the dying prioress, rising in her bed, with clasped hands, and fervently uplifted eyes, exclaimed, “ In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, nor wilt Thou suffer the creature who trusts in Thee to be confounded.”

The bishop however, still went on, calling her the scourge of the diocese, declaring she was sent there as a judgment on their sins, with a variety of other opprobrious expressions.

When the prioress, having now not a day to live, and finding she was really to be denied the last sacraments, and every mark of Christian communion unless she consented to lend her hand to perjury, besought him with many tears ; but finding it availed nothing, she wiped her tears away and said, “ Well, my lord, I am content to bear with resignation whatever deprivation my GOD sees fit ; I am



convinced that His divine grace can fully supply even the want of sacraments."

The Bishop of Blois, on seeing her deep distress, had been in hopes of gaining his point, but when he perceived that all his efforts were fruitless, he fell into a violent fury, and in a voice of thunder declared that her body should be thrown out as a carcass upon the dunghill, and never should be buried in consecrated ground.

"My lord, as it pleases you," replied the nun. The physician, who happened to be present, now warmly interposed, and addressing himself with some severity to the bishop, asked him, "how he could in conscience refuse the sacraments to a dying person on so very frivolous a pretext; and how he could possibly himself either live in peace, or die in hope, while he pursued a conduct so deficient in equity, and so opposite to Christian charity and meekness?" The bishop made no reply, but went his way.

The prioress knowing that she had now not many hours to live, and no priest being at hand to receive her confession, assembled the whole community, consisting of the abbess and eighty nuns — all of them her persecutors and her enemies — and in their presence, made aloud a public confession to God of all her sins. This she did with such unfeigned piety and humility, that the nuns — prejudiced against

her as they were — not only were much edified, but could not refrain from tears. Indeed, when they saw her extremity, and when her sweet serenity of soul proved to them it was not obstinacy, but conscience, that dictated her non-compliance, they repented of the course they had pursued, and with lamentations they could no longer suppress, bewailed her cruel situation.

Having concluded her confession, she turned from every worldly thought, and begged the nuns to recite to her the psalms, and to read the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel, and the accounts of our Saviour's passion; during which she either joined in the recitation, or was occupied, as appeared by her uplifted hands and eyes, in prayer. In this state she continued till twelve o'clock at night, "when," says one of the nuns, "the light of the candles happening to shine on her countenance, an awful majesty of settled peace, tranquillity, and joy, showed that without a sigh or groan, her blessed spirit had departed to her Lord in a deep serenity of faith and love, which made us tremble."

Scarcely was she dead when the bishop, who had repented of his harshness and cruelty, returned, intending to give her the sacraments. On entering the room he saw she was no more; the heavenly peace on her countenance, seemed to strike him to the heart, and to fill him with remorse. Neverthe-

less he did not wholly depart from his threat; and the last prioress of Port Royal — the holy — the excellent — the eminent — Madame du Mesnil Courtiaux — was buried in an old abandoned burying ground, overgrown with nettles, and full of rubbish, apart from the other nuns, and without the usual prayers and ceremonies of her church.

Her latter end, however, left a deep impression on the minds of the community; and thirty, out of the eighty nuns of which it consisted, persisted in attending her to the grave, to show, as they said, some little mark of the high respect they entertained for her eminent piety.

Many years afterwards, the infirmarian of that convent wrote an account of her to one of her friends, which has been handed down to us. She says, “Madame du Courtiaux, besides her high birth, which appeared in a dignity, mingled with courtesy and sweetness, in all she did, was also a lady of fine accomplishments, great learning, and super-eminent piety, which was a continual example and edification to us. She always rose at four in the morning, and spent two hours in private prayer. At six she joined in our public service till eight, when she retired to her own room, and worked for the poor till dinner, which was at eleven o’clock. She fasted all the year round excepting Sundays and paschal time; and even then she always

abstained. After her repast, the abbess and the prioress of our convent, who alone had permission to visit her, spent an hour with her. When they retired, our saint-like prisoner either worked for the poor, or studied, chiefly in the scriptures; or else wrote, for which she had both talent and unction, till three, when she prayed before the blessed sacrament for an hour and three quarters, and then attended vespers with the community. At six her collation was taken to her in her cell, after which the same nuns as before paid her another visit. She went to bed at eight, and always rose in the night and spent a considerable time in prayer; indeed her life was a continual prayer. She was of a firm, but gentle, sweet and tranquil spirit; much beloved, and above all, revered and respected. Her words were few, but weighty, solid, and dignified. She seemed most sympathising and tenderly attached to her friends, but of great tranquillity of mind and heart. She lived in a most edifying and austere manner, following her rule with the same exactness as if she was in her own convent, even to the confession of her faults, which, not being received by the priest, she made regularly in the most edifying and devout manner, every Friday, at the foot of a crucifix."

Soon after her death, a character drawn up in the form of an epitaph was handed about in the most

distinguished circles in Paris; where it excited so much attention, and occasioned such a lively interest, that it was soon dispersed even to the most remote provinces of France, Flanders, and Holland. The following, though much abridged and by no means a literal translation, is its substance.

## “EPITAPH

BY A FRIEND TO THE TRUTH.

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*‘Adoranda est veritas etiam cruci affixa.’*

AWAITING THE JOYFUL COMING OF HER LORD ;  
HERE REPOSE IN A FOREIGN SEPULTURE,  
THE MORTAL REMAINS

OF THE

REVEREND MERE CLAUDE LOUISE

OF

ST. ANASTASIE DU MESNIL DES COURTIAUX,

THE LAST

PRIORESS OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.”

“Faithful in holiness, she discharged her arduous trust as a good and prudent steward, until it pleased her Lord to call her from works to rewards.

“Respected by the world she had quitted, for high birth and eminent talents, she was venerated in her retreat and subsequent misfortunes, for her Christian courage, humility and firmness. She was

nearly twenty-five years of age, when bereaved by sudden death of her father. The stroke of mercy which *took him* to behold THE GLORY, *made her* a partaker of THE GRACE of our Lord. Through that divine grace, she determined thenceforth to live the life of faith which is righteousness, peace, and assurance here, and immortality hereafter. Thus did this blow, like every chastening of the GOD of love, prove abundant in blessing. Like a sudden gale it wafted her at once into the port of salvation. She bowed her neck and her heart to the Lord; she took upon herself the light yoke of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, as one deeply penetrated with shame and sorrow at having deferred it so long; and she found rest to her soul.

“ At the time when she entered the house of the Lord, the church had rest for a season; and, as a wise virgin, she profited by this season of repose, to lay up that store which might keep her lamp burning with a steady flame throughout the dark night which was at hand, that it might shine in undiminished brightness even till the bridegroom should appear.

“ The bright constellation of the distinguished inhabitants of Port Royal shone forth in all their lustre; their brilliant light was hailed with admiration even by the world, whose darkness it manifested. Its pastors, followers of the Good Shepherd, abun-



dantly fed them with the bread and water of life. The blessing of GOD was upon them. The great followed their exhortation with veneration and child-like simplicity; the learned sat at their feet to learn true wisdom; and the poor found protection in their wide-extended charities. Port Royal then seemed as the cedar of Libanus, whose roots strike deep into the soil in impregnable strength, whose head rises to the heavens, whose wood is incorruptible, whose fragrance extends far around, on whose lofty summits the towering eagles, the kings of the feathered tribe, build their cyries, whose boughs afford fruit to the fowls of the air, and whose wide-spread branches afford a secure shadow from the heat to all the tribes around. Such, at that time, was Port Royal; so that even the host of aliens, who have overwhelmed her, when they looked towards this wilderness, and saw her Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes, the Spirit of GOD involuntarily came upon them; and though they came to curse, they were compelled to bless.

“Such was Port Royal, at the time that the Mère du Mesnil Courtiaux became one of its inhabitants. As a wise steward, she did not, in the midst of the days of plenty, forget the years of famine and desolation, which were even then close at hand. She hastened to work whilst it is day; knowing that the night soon cometh, in which no man can work. She

toiled to lay up for herself that treasure incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal in the heavens: which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where no thief can break through and steal.

“She knew that the signs of the times change from morn even until eve; and that, with God, what seems far off, is as it were, already close at hand.

“Accordingly, the cloud, at first no bigger than a man’s hand, soon began to spread; the heavens were overhung with thick darkness. An awful silence succeeded; fear seized every heart, nor was the pause of dread expectation long. The storm soon burst, which in its progress overwhelmed Port Royal.

“The excellent spiritual guides of Port Royal were all either lingering in distant exiles on earth, or gone to their rewards in heaven; the venerable mothers who were companions of those who had first established the reform, had successively quitted this life, in which they lived for Christ, to enjoy one in the heavens with Him, which is far better; when the jealousy of the adversary of the souls of men, renewed that terrible persecution against its saints, which terminated in the final dispersion of the nuns, and the demolition of their monastery.

“It was in these tempestuous times that the Mère de St. Anastasie was placed at the helm. On the

20th of April, 1706, in the heat of a heavy persecution—the court and Jesuits being leagued against them, all access being denied to external friends; the Mère Elizabeth de St. Anne Boulard de Ninvilliers, the last abbess of Port Royal, being on her death-bed, at the very last extremity, and about to render her spirit into the hands of GOD who gave it; and her prioress, Julie de St. Baudran, having also not two hours to live; no guide or counsellor being near—she sent for the Mère Anastasie, then a simple nun, and with her dying breath nominated her prioress. She preferred her before others of a more advanced age, on account of her rare merit, and entrusted her with the sole government of the helm in this time of tempests. The Sœur Anastasie, bursting into tears, threw herself at the foot of the bed of her dying abbess, and conjured her to spare her youth and inexperience; but in vain. The shades of death already covered the face of the abbess; with difficulty she lifted up her death-cold hands, and placing them on the head of the Sœur Anastasie, with a faltering and broken voice pronounced these words: ‘His grace is sufficient for thee. Be thou faithful unto death, and He shall give thee a crown of life.’ The abbess then lay down and immediately expired. Thus the Mère Anastasie had the solemn charge, as it were, forced upon her. No royal permission being granted to elect another abbess, the new prioress sustained, for

above three years, all the weight of the persecutions and of the business which devolved upon her, with as much prudence as firmness. She spared herself in nothing ; she did all that wisdom, strength, and prudence, chastened by Christian meekness and humility, can do. The regularity which had been established in this monastery for above a century, she preserved inviolate, in its pristine purity, holiness, charity, and sanctity.

“ As far as possible, she rendered abortive the chicanery of her enemies ; and if success did not crown her endeavours, it was not because her cause was unrighteous. It could not but sink, overwhelmed by the enormous weight and power of combined enemies, who used every means which the prince of the power of this world suggested to them. Nothing could be superior to her Christian patience. During the course of a long life of hardship and persecutions, she bore not only all that the most black calumny could invent, both against herself and her sisters ; enduring not only the usurpation of the revenues of her monastery, and the consequent state of poverty attendant upon it, but likewise the deprivation of the sacraments, without having been heard to utter one impatient word. Such is the power of the grace of GOD ! So did it wholly transform a temper originally lofty and impetuous. A faithful imitator of the superiors who had preceded her, nothing could shake

her inviolable constancy ; their blessed deaths, which were continually before the eye of her mind, strengthened her courage in following their holy lives : walking as seeing Him who is invisible, even in the cell of her prison, she had this testimony that she pleased GOD ; and after the weary pilgrimage of this life, she had the favour to die in faith, and in a peace which passeth all understanding.

“ At length the long-threatened thunderbolt fell, and on the 20th of October, 1709, the nuns were dispersed in various prisons. The place of her exile was Blois. Immured in a strait prison, amidst the unabated rigours of a hard captivity, she sat still under the shadow of the cross, and tasted all the sweetness of the divine fruit borne by that blessed tree. Dead to men, she was never more alive to GOD, nor more assiduous in his service.\* Interdicted the sacraments by pastors whom a mercenary cupidity

\* “ Hominibus mortua, soli Deo vivens, cui nunquam majori fide et devotione famulata est, pastorum errori obnoxiorum judicio sacris interdicta, sed a principe pastorum animarum Episcopo, *solo immortalis et infallibili Pontifice*, cibo invisibili recreata atque intus divino robore confortata ; communicans Christi passionibus et de calice ejus bibens, per patientiam ad propositum sibi certamen cucurrit : sæpius impugnata, nusquam expugnata aut in illo imminuta ; semper respiciens in auctorem et consummatorem fidei JESUM,” &c. &c.—*Nicrol. Eptaph of Mde. du Mesnil Courtiaux*, pp. 476, 477.

The above specimen of the original is inserted, that the reader may be fully convinced how far the spirit is preserved, and the strain of sentiment faithfully represented.

had led into error, the Good Shepherd Himself, the Prince and Bishop of souls, the *only* Immortal and *Infallible Pontiff*, more than compensated her, by nourishing her with the invisible food, that the world knows not of, by supporting her with that divine strength which is made perfect even in weakness, and by giving her to communicate and have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Drinking of His cup, and baptized with His baptism, she ran with patience the race set before her, pressing toward the mark for the prize of her high calling, even that crown laid up in heaven by the Righteous Judge for all who love His appearing. Often attacked, but never conquered, she remained steadfast, immovable, ever looking unto Jesus the author, until He became the finisher of her faith; having borne, without the camp, that reproach which the world casts upon the children of GOD, she went forth to meet her Heavenly Bridegroom, with a joyous and humble confidence; and truly ‘an entrance was ministered unto her *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’

“She survived her monastery of Port Royal des Champs, which was demolished after the dispersion of the nuns, and died at Blois, in the convent of the Ursulines, in which she had been exiled, the 18th of March, 1716, aged sixty-six years and eleven months; after forty years adorning her holy religious profes-



sion, and after six years, four months, and twenty days of solitude, captivity, and exile.\*

“Peace be to her mortal remains ;  
Joyful immortality, through grace, to her  
redeemed spirit.”

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\* This epitaph is taken from that in the *Nécrologie*.

## CHAP. III.

JESUITS. — CARDINAL DE NOAILLES. — LOUIS XIV.

WHILST the exemplary lives of all the nuns of Port Royal, and the blessed deaths of several of their number, created a great sensation in the public mind, the conduct of its enemies tended still farther to fix and deepen these impressions.

It has already been observed that the Jesuits were much fallen from their pristine piety. The Ignatius's, the Francis Regis's, the Rodriguez's, the Grenades, were no more; and a society, the foundation of which was laid in piety and humility, now exhibited the same mixture of good and evil characters as the world at large. An enemy had, in the lapse of years, sowed the good field with tares; and though both were suffered to remain, it was but too obvious, that a very small part indeed could be reckoned amongst the good wheat, which shall be gathered up and put into the garner. The same society to which Europe was first indebted for the best seminaries and colleges it

then afforded, was now occupied in paralysing the moral sense of the civilised world, by disseminating the baleful poison of casuistical divinity; and the very same body, which, emulating the zeal and piety of apostles, had, through indescribable difficulties and dangers, formed the reduction of Paraguay, and exhibited one of the most lovely specimens of Christian society amongst the savages of South America, was beheld in Europe as the relentless persecutors of the enlightened Christianity of their Port Royal brethren. They were permitted in wrath to gratify their cruel malice to a fearful extent; but their iniquitous triumph was hardly completed, when like the thunder of divine indignation, a stroke burst upon them from a distant quarter, which shook their credit to the very foundation. Scarcely had the prison doors closed upon their captives, and their hopes of regaining their unrivalled influence begun to revive, when the whole of that influence was blasted by a foreign hand; and the immense accumulation of wealth and power, the fruit of such arduous toil, such mental labours, and in some instances, of such duplicity and crime, was suddenly dissipated into air, and dissolved like the baseless fabric of a vision.

An accusation, presented by the powerful, and supported by a mass of evidence, was brought forward against this unscrupulous fraternity of having openly encouraged the most infamous practices of

idolatry in China\*, to preserve their own credit and power.

Great, indeed, was the accumulation of evidence produced on this occasion, and equally marvellous was the ingenuity displayed in endeavouring to ward off the stroke, or at least to blunt its edge; but, whatever were the palliations, explanations, or extenuations, offered by the few who still remained their friends, it is certain that from this blow they never recovered. They sunk for ever in the estimation of the public at large, and their fall was proportionate to the very extensive influence they had previously enjoyed.

Then was revived the remembrance of Port Royal, with its unrivalled talents, and its exemplary piety. The constancy with which its followers had uniformly borne the loss of estimation, wealth, liberty, and even of life itself, rather than in one single point equivocate, was contrasted with the conduct of its persecutors, who were accused of betraying their GOD for gold. France remembered, with a bitter pang, that she had sacrificed the children of GOD, demolished their sanctuary, and cast out their ashes as a vile thing,

\* Poulain, i. p. 292. Beausset's *Vie de Fénelon*, ii. pp. 349, 352. Clem. x. pp. 41, 42. Racine, *Hist. Eccles.* tom. xii. under the articles Pénitence, Morale, pp. 1—105. *Condemnation de la Morale des Casuistes, Morale des Jésuites*, pp. 105—275. See concerning the Chinese and other Jesuit missions, pp. 197—271.

at the instigation of those, who, though bearing the appearance of angels of light, turned out to be fomenters of idolatry, and worshippers with heathens of strange gods.

If this remorse was felt by France in general, it was doubly so by those who had been the immediate agents of the Jesuits in the destruction of Port Royal, and in the horrible outrages against both piety and humanity which had been perpetrated.

The Cardinal de Noailles, the principal agent in this iniquitous persecution, began to discover that he had been made the tool of wicked and designing men, and to awaken to a sense of his most fearful guilt. Infirm of purpose, but far from being ill disposed; naturally kind, susceptible of pious impressions, and endowed with a tender conscience, but easily deceived, alarmed, and over-persuaded, he had unwillingly consented to the destruction of Port Royal. Now, however, that he clearly saw the wickedness of those to whom he had lent himself, he became fully convinced of the innocence of those whom his weakness and irresolution had been the means of oppressing. His conscience became thoroughly awakened, and every new report of some Port Royal victim whom he had lent himself to destroy agonised his soul; a deep perturbation and disquietude seized upon him, and his heart might truly be said to be rent with remorse and sorrow.

In his distress he sent again for his faithful secretary Thomassin, and discovered to him the terrible state of mind in which he found himself. He told him that he most bitterly repented of not having followed his advice; that Port Royal was never absent from his mind, that its recollection rose up continually before him, and followed him everywhere. That he felt a perpetual restlessness, and seemed on his pillow, in the visions of the night, alternately to see it flourishing, peopled with saints and men of letters, blessing and blessed; and then suddenly to behold the scene reversed, and to view the desolate condition to which his irresolution had reduced it. He seemed to hear the bleak winds of winter whistling through its desolate passages, to see the nettles overgrowing its courts, the foxes peeping out at the windows, and the growling wolves disputing over the mangled remains of its pious inhabitants, whilst the very stones of its foundations seemed to be torn up and hurled at his guilty head by some invisible hand.

M. Thomassin, sensibly affected by the cardinal's extreme anguish, endeavoured to speak to him as a Christian should do. Without mitigating or palliating his culpable weakness, he sought to soothe him by those consolations which may be humbly appropriated even by the guiltiest of sinners, when they become sincerely penitent. But the remorse of the cardinal



was not to be so easily appeased. He declared that he could not be satisfied without going to the very spot, to behold the awful desolation which his sin had caused, and in the very scene whence the record of his offence rose to heaven, and there humbly to confess it before GOD, and implore His mercy, if it were not indeed too late. In short, he said, that as the only tribute of respect he could now pay to Port Royal, and as an unfeigned mark of deep humiliation and repentance, he must visit the ruins, and water them with his tears; and that he desired his true and faithful friend M. Thomassin, to accompany him.

The day was fixed. At the appointed hour the cardinal called, in his carriage, and they both went together. During the whole journey, the cardinal appeared deeply affected, and maintained a profound silence. On arriving at the brow of the hill upon which Les Granges are situated, and from which the top of the spire of Port Royal is first visible, he could no longer suppress his emotion, but, covering his face with both his hands, burst into a torrent of tears, which however seemed so far from relieving him, that he appeared to be almost suffocated and convulsed with sobs. "In short," said M. Thomassin, "his groans were not so much like the anguish of a man, as the suppressed groanings of some animal in torture, so that I began to be absolutely terrified at the horrible remorse with which he was agitated.

I tried to calm him, but in vain. Overwhelmed with the distressing images which were presented to his conscience, he heeded me not. I then urged him by every possible persuasive to return, fearing lest a nearer view of the scene of desolation should really be succeeded by some fatal result either to his mind or body ; but in vain. Breaking away from me, he quitted his carriage, and drew near, bareheaded and with clasped hands, in inconceivable agony ; and though his legs trembled under him, so that I could scarcely support him, and that he was often constrained to stop, from the violence of his emotion, he would nevertheless proceed, exclaiming, ‘No, no, I will go on, yes, to the very end. I will not be spared any part. I will see my enormous sin in all its horror. Here, in the midst of this miserable devastation, here, will I unburthen my mind ; here it may be, (O, here may it indeed be !) that the God of all compassion will yet have mercy on me, a miserable sinner !’ Then, beating his breast, and wringing his hands, like one frantic with grief, he prostrated himself on the earth, amidst the wide-spread desolation, and cried aloud for mercy.” At length he came to the burying ground. The yawning graves were still gaping on every side, and on the dismantled wall, though covered with waving nettles and wild flowers, the inscriptions were still visible over the portal ; on the outer side, “Time is yet before thee ;”

on the inner, "Time is for ever behind thee." Here he seemed to be seized with an absolute agony—the very frenzy of raving despair. "O!" said he, beating his breast, "all these dismantled stones will rise against me at the day of judgment. O, how shall I ever bear the vast, the heavy load!" When the cardinal was so completely exhausted as to be quite incapable of any resistance, M. Thomassin put him again into his carriage, and brought him back; which was not however accomplished without considerable difficulty, for his grief was so excessive, that it seemed to be the alternate ravings of the wildest frenzy, succeeded by the gloom of the blackest despair.

From this period, the cardinal sincerely endeavoured to repair the injuries he had done to Port Royal, by uniform kindness towards those nuns who still survived the stroke of their dispersion, and the protracted and cruel hardships experienced in their various captivities; but with the very best intentions, he could do but little, owing to the implacable virulence and deep-rooted prejudices fomented in the king's mind by Madame de Maintenon. Accordingly, the nuns of Port Royal remained in the same state of cruel persecution we have briefly described, till the death of Louis the Fourteenth, which took place in September, 1715; and whilst they, in the depths of their dungeons, felt their peace deepen, and their hopes brighten more and more, as they approached a perfect

and eternal day, their unhappy persecutor, from the meridian of worldly splendour, had seen the sun of his prosperity gradually decline, till the long evening of his days, desolate, solitary, and cheerless, set in; and as the lengthening shadows stretched across his path, the dark shades of the tomb began to close around him, uncheered by the bright evening star of Christian hope. In the last hours of his life, abandoned by Madame de Maintenon, whom he had raised from obscurity, to whom he had sacrificed even the decencies of his state, and whose tool he had been in his persecutions; he sent for those to whom he had the misfortune to give his spiritual confidence, — the Cardinals de Rohan, and de Bussy, and the Père Le Tellier, a Jesuit; and when they stood around his dying bed, he addressed to them in great anguish of spirit these memorable words. “If, indeed, you have misled and deceived me, you are deeply guilty; for indeed I acted in good faith — indeed I sought the peace of the church.” Thus died Louis the Fourteenth! And did not the Lord avenge his slaughtered saints? His latter end, as we have seen, was not peace, neither was his death the death of the righteous: and before he was called to his dread account, three successive heirs to the crown were carried to an early tomb; the subsequent history of his family and the judgment day will tell

the rest. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

Ascending the throne in an early minority, harassed by the distractions of civil war, Louis was educated in the school of adversity, without reaping its best benefit. He derived there the lessons of human prudence, but had the misfortune not to learn those of heavenly wisdom. Hence subsequent prosperity, sent as a blessing, proved to him a snare. Fitted by the native grandeur of his mind, as well as by his situation, to become a central point of reunion to the talents of his nation; the fine arts flourished under the protection of his throne, and poets selected him as the subject of their song. His praises sounded from the fortified rocks, and broad waters of the Rhine, to where they were re-echoed by the snow-capped Pyrenees; and the prostrate nations whom his victorious arms had subdued, were compelled to bow their reluctant necks to his yoke.

But, when he knew GOD, he glorified Him not as GOD, neither was thankful to Him who gave him so much richly to enjoy; and even as he did not like to retain GOD in his knowledge, he seemed given over to a reprobate mind. Untouched by the signal prosperity of his public career, he became of the number of those who worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

The Lord looked down from heaven, and saw that he was become vain in his imagination, and that his foolish heart was darkened. GOD lifted up his voice and spake — spake by his providences ; but, because He is long-suffering and kind, of tender mercy and slow to anger, remembering that we are but dust ; and because He sheweth mercy unto thousands of generations of them that love Him and keep His commandments, He looked down on the descendant of St. Louis in pity and tender compassion, and laying a gentle hand upon him, first began to counsel him by the awful examples of the partners of his guilt.\*

The king was startled ; perturbations seized his mind and conscience. But his fear only was alarmed, his heart remained unchanged. He turned indeed for a while from his wallowing in the mire ; but his reformation was in outward form, not in the power of the Spirit ; his was not a conversion from carelessness to genuine and vital religion, but only from open vice to exterior formality ; he quitted not all creatures for the Creator, but only the indulgence of open sin for the garnish of the whited sepulchre. He assumed the form of godliness, but remained a stranger to its power. He had sufficient zeal for the

\* See the awful accounts of the ends of Mesdames de Montespan and Fontanges, in "St. Simon's Mémoires."



ceremonial, which is the outward garb of the children of light ; but he forgot that, to be indeed a son of GOD, he must be born again of the Spirit, without which no man can enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus while he turned from many of the works of unrighteousness, his heart was still unrenewed : all old things had not passed away, and all things had not become new.

Yet the long-suffering GOD had patience with him still. Once again His voice spoke in His providences, and raising up in His own house a great example of insufficient religion, He bade him consider the end of these things, and understand it perfectly.

One arose before his eyes, far different from the rest, abounding in many of the choicest gifts of GOD to human nature. Solid in understanding, unblamable in outward conduct, wise, prudent, and accomplished ; thus much and yet more was the celebrated Madame de Maintenon. Raised from the very depths of poverty and obscurity by progressive steps, to seat herself next the throne, (and that by dint of real merit) she was strictly decorous in all her demeanour ; untainted even by suspicion, she was punctiliously exact, not only in the performance of her religious observances, but in many important points she was a pattern of that obedience which religion enjoins : she heard gladly, and like Herod, did many things. She was of those who fast twice a week, and give tithes

of all they possess, and who, touching the righteousness of the law, are blameless : she seemed to want nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit, nothing of Christianity but the life. But if any man have not the spirit of CHRIST, he is none of His. Like the Mère Angélique, Madame de Maintenon possessed supereminently, the talents requisite for prudent government ; but though the trees were thus far externally alike, yet their fruits were as different as the roots by which they were produced. The Mère Angélique, following the Good Shepherd, and led by His voice, established a society, which, whilst it flourished, diffused vital religion over Catholic Christendom ; and whose numerous writings have, since its destruction, proved a solace and edification, equally to the catholic and to the protestant churches. Madame de Maintenon, a decorous follower of the world, attentive to the voice of well-understood ambition, always and uniformly paid homage, not only to the ceremonial of religion, but to many of the respectable social duties. But the sheep alone it is who know the Good Shepherd's voice, and who distinguish it from that of the stranger. Hence, through ignorance, she used her influence to quench the flame of vital religion wherever it sprung up, whether in catholic or protestant communities. Both the Mère Angélique and Madame de Maintenon established monasteries.

Both institutions were in the very same district, and each reflected well-earned celebrity on the noble foundresses. But the requisite recommendation to the one, was piety; that to the other, elevated rank. From the establishment of the Mère Angélique, want of vocation was the only exclusion; from that of Madame de Maintenon, not only want of rank, but the want of interest, nay, even any personal deformity or accidental blemish, was decisively exclusive.\* In the monastery formed by the Mère Angélique, the Holy Scriptures were daily studied, kneeling or prostrate, and were applied to the conversion of the heart, to the edification and sanctification of the soul, and to prepare it for heaven; in the monastery (if monastery St. Cyr may be called) founded by Madame de Maintenon, the scriptures were also used, but used as the subjects of theatrical representation: and the historic examples of holy writ were employed, not for edification, but as means of acquiring a graceful carriage and good enunciation, in order to amuse the king, and form her disciples for inhabitants of a profligate and dissipated court.†

\* See the comparison between Port Royal and St. Cyr, in the "*Ruines de Port Royal*," pp. 6. 10.

† For this character of Madame de Maintenon, see the anecdotes related in the "*Mémoires de St. Simon*," i. pp. 113—125. 136—151; iv. pp. 54—58, 75—81, 81—91, 91—95, 288—389; also Beaumelle's "*Vie de Maintenon*," and "*Lettres de Maintenon*."

The Mère Angélique, descended from a noble and affluent family, and of high intellectual endowments, counted all these advantages as dross, so that she might win Christ. After beginning, by being the blessed means of the conversion of her whole most talented and truly excellent family, she went on from faith to faith, and from grace to grace, exhibiting a bright example of Christian holiness — of whom the world and the age were not worthy. Opposition met her at every step; persecutions on all hands thickened around her, and hedged her in on every side; till at length seeing the object of her whole life and endeavours on the point of being overthrown; immured and imprisoned in that house which was bestowed by the munificence of her family and constituted a royal abbey; surrounded by calumniators and enemies; threatened with violence by the civil power; a martyr to a most lingering and excruciating disease, but possessing her soul in perfect peace, la Mère Angélique expired, full of joy, serenity, assurance, and triumphant faith.

Madame de Maintenon, on the other hand, sprung from a family obscure, and comparatively little known, acted prudently, to win a distinguished worldly reputation. She began by supplanting her benefactress, whose patient perseverance and reiterated endeavours, had succeeded in bringing her forward. She proceeded from honour to honour, above

suspicion, and untainted by the breath of malice or calumny; till, surrounded by partisans, flatterers, and dependants, and subjecting by her capricious smiles the prostrate princes of the royal blood, who, freezing in winter snows, accompanied her equipage on foot and bareheaded, she obtained a degree of worldly prosperity, far beyond all that the wildest imagination can offer to dazzle the hopes of any subject. In short, she became the ruler of the throne itself, which unblushingly stooped to her sway; but after she had grasped the bright bubble which reflected such dazzling colours, she found it delusive, hollow, and empty. Dull, heartless, drear, and cheerless; without object, stimulus, or hope; an old age of apathetic despondency proved the sole meed of a life of insufficient religion; of habits of social usefulness indeed, but grounded on no firmer basis than an enlightened self-love; and of a heart which stopped short of truly loving God.

Thus spake the voice of God by providences, in which judgment was tempered with mercy; but it spoke in vain. Louis understood it not. His heart waxed gross, and his ears were dull of hearing. Changed only, as has been said before, from the publican, who committed many notorious vices, to the professing pharisee; whilst he duly paid tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, he neglected judgment, mercy and faith — the weightier matters of the law.

Hence because he sought not the truth with his whole heart, he was entangled in a net of his own devising, and given over to strong delusions so as to believe a lie. He inquired of the Lord, without putting away his idols from his heart; therefore was he answered according to the multitudes of his idols. Hence whilst he sedulously followed the forms of the church, he so little understood the spirit of Christ, that, under the influence of Madame de Maintenon, he had the misfortune to become one of the most virulent persecutors of vital religion.

He signed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and both sanctioned and authorised the imprisonment of Madame Guyon, the exile of the venerable archbishop of Cambray, and the destruction of Port Royal.

Louis the Fourteenth, entitled the Great, is justly stigmatised in the page of history as the cruel and relentless persecutor of vital religion in France. Little did he imagine, that at no very remote period, the genuine spirit of religion being extinct, and the Shekinah having departed, the outward temple — no longer defended by the bright talents and pens of the Tillemonts, Pascals, Nicoles, Sacis, and Arnaulds,— would sink beneath the poisoned darts of the aliens: and that in the hideous scene of ruin, his own descendants would be buried, amongst the very first, in its fall. Little did he foresee, that the very palace



of Versailles, in which he signed the death-warrant of all spiritual religion, would be the first to be stripped and dismantled, in the wide and long, and desolating storm, which his own perversity and his persecuting cruelty had raised. Like Samson of old, deluded by the flattering blandishments of an ambitious woman, and betrayed into the hands of his enemies, he was blinded: and putting forth his gigantic strength, to shake the pillars of the temple, he unwittingly, and not as the prototype, sank overwhelmed and crushed in the accumulated ruin, which he had himself drawn down upon his own head.

Such were the disastrous consequences of a reign, distinguished not more by the brilliant constellation of talents which gave it lustre, than by the immorality and profusion of the prince, and by the protracted, ruinous, and needless foreign wars, which began by loading the nation with insufferable burthens, and terminated in the total subversion of that royal authority, by whose insatiable luxury and ambition they had been originally imposed. A reign, remarkable for men of eminent distinction, alike in literature and in piety, but rendered eternally infamous by the persecuting spirit of its monarch.

Louis might have been truly said, in the early part of his reign, like St. Paul in the beginning of his journey, to have been surrounded by a great light from heaven; and in his progress, we have observed

that the compassionate Saviour, by the instrumentality of awful providences, continually addressed to his heart the awful inquiry, "Why persecutest Thou me?" and showed him by His terrible judgments on the partners of his guilt, that "it is not only hard, but dangerous to kick against the pricks." Here the analogy ends. Unlike the great apostle of the Gentiles, Louis, was not obedient to the heavenly vision. He turned not to that inward spiritual guide, who would have instructed him more perfectly in the things which are written in His Book, and who would have told him what he must do — to that guide who alone could have cured him of his blindness: hence the scales remained upon his eyes, and the veil was not removed from his heart.

The meridian sun of that glory, to which he had alike sacrificed himself and his people, began rapidly to decline. One dark providence quickly succeeded another. He had forced down the holy hands which were wont to be uplifted, and his enemies soon prevailed against him. His fortresses were surrendered, his campaigns were disastrous, his fields were the prey of the spoiler.

The king's own family was struck; and reiterated blows in rapid succession sent his daughter-in-law, and three successive heirs to the crown, to an early tomb.\* A sudden consternation and awe spread

\* See the interesting account of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy in St. Simon, tom. i. pp. 247—310.

over the defenceless land; and the gloomy cloud was rendered yet darker, by the impenetrable mystery that lowered over their common grave. Thus stood Louis, defenceless, stricken, and alone; in vain opposing the hoary honours of his defenceless head, to the driving storm. As the sun whose meridian splendour is past, shorn of its brightness, pursues its solitary and declining course, through the dark and pathless void of the heavens, till he finally sets in fallen majesty amidst the chill and cheerless fogs of a cold and wintry evening; so Louis the Fourteenth, bereft alike of glory and the solace of domestic comfort, desolate, cheerless, and alone, pursued the remainder of the dreary path which led him to the tomb.

The murmur of popular applause was changed unto the portentous silence of discontent; the cheering voice of domestic kindness was hushed in the silent grave; the chillness of frozen age crept upon him, benumbing his aching heart; and the dark and lengthening shadows of the grave, deepening around him and stretching across his desolate path, made the valley more dismal and appalling; whilst the low, but vengeful murmurs of a troubled people, began to indicate the gathering storm.

Yet in the dread stillness, a voice arose; the voice of that divine love which overcometh evil with good, and which is stronger than death.

From their distant exiles, and from the depths of their remote dungeons; the prayers of the Arnaulds, the Sacis, the Fénétons\*, the Guyons, and the Valois†, arose continually in remembrance before GOD, and cried for mercy on their persecutors. The fervent and effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. Louis the Fourteenth indeed slept with his fathers, but the last departing beam of the long day of grace still continued to linger.

A time was still afforded for repentance; the awful catastrophe was for a while suspended; the end was not yet. Sentence against the evil work was not executed, until a profligate regent, and his licentious successor, having filled up the measure of iniquity, the terrible judgment of the Lord no longer tarried. The brooding tempest burst upon unhappy France; and a long and tremendous hurricane swept the guilty land. The earthquake from beneath uprooted his foundations; the bolt from above struck the throne; and the besom of destruction spared neither home nor altar. GOD, who visits upon the third and fourth generations the sins of the fathers, singled out and struck, in the midst of the petrified nations, the family of royalty by which He had been set at nought.

\* See the letter written by Fénélon on his death-bed to P. Le Tellier, in "Beausset's Life," pp. 458—461, tom. iii.

† See "Lettres de Madame Gertrude de Valois."

But even in this tremendous justice, He remembered mercy. The voice of His thunder indeed was heard; it spoke to startled Europe — it spoke to distant centuries, and to unborn generations of men, the dread retribution which attends the neglected duties of the altar and the throne. The thunder-bolt indeed fell; but not until divine grace had prepared the heart of him who was smitten; nor until divine love had softened and tempered the blow. Louis XVI. was numbered amongst the sons of God, and was an humble follower of His Divine Master, “who was meek and lowly in heart, who when He was reviled, reviled not again; and who, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” Louis despised not the chastening of the Lord, neither did he faint under it; but, in the horrors of a long and contumelious captivity, he drew rich fruits of righteousness from the sore chastisement; till patience having had her perfect work, the light affliction, which was but for a moment, was followed with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and the final stroke, which spoke so awful a lesson to every nation of the world, transported from increasing sorrows and conflicting troubles on earth, “*Louis the son of St. Louis, to eternal mansions in the heavens!*”

## CHAP. IV.

MADEMOISELLE DE JONCOUX. — MALNOUE.

To return however to the thread of our narrative. Soon after the death of Louis the Fourteenth, all the prisoners detained merely on account of religion, were liberated both from the Bastille, and every other state prison in France. None more deserved this measure of justice, than the nuns of Port Royal, exiles, captives, and dispersed for this very cause. At this favourable juncture, their friends indulged the hope, that some relief might perhaps be extended to them; and they determined to interest themselves in their favour. A way had already been prepared for their efforts, by the active zeal and steady fidelity of Mademoiselle de Joncoux or Joncour, a lady equally noted for piety, learning, and active habits of business. Her parents, who resided at Auvergne, were alike distinguished for their piety, and their originality of mind. Mademoiselle de Joncoux received an education of the highest class, both with respect to religion and literature; and being naturally endowed with great quickness and solidity of understanding,



she was regarded by all her acquaintances as a kind of prodigy. She acquired a critical knowledge of Latin; which she at first learnt with a view to understand more perfectly the church service, and the writings of St. Austin. It is to her elegant and learned pen, that the world is indebted for the celebrated translation of Nicole's voluminous notes to the "*Lettres Provinciales*," published originally in Latin under the assumed name of Wendrock.

From her early youth, Mademoiselle de Joncoux entertained a filial reverence and attachment for Port Royal; and as she grew up, she became equally devoted to piety and to literature. When the last persecution of Port Royal commenced, she was engaged in the arduous labour of translating the disquisitions of Paul Iræneus; and though intensely interested in this work she immediately relinquished it, and henceforth wholly devoted her talents, her purse, and her energies, to the service of her oppressed friends. When their revenues were seized, her fortune was, with a bountiful hand, applied to their relief. When they were vexed with unjust, and endless litigations, her clear penetrating mind unravelled all the mazes of misapplied law. She discovered and pursued iniquitous injustice in all its windings and latent concealments; and without ever quitting the upright path of integrity herself, she dragged forth the lurking fiend to public view and

public abhorrence. She easily detected the latent fallacies of their unjust oppressors, and repelled their blows with all the zeal of a devoted friendship, as well as with consummate legal skill. In vain did the noblesse, the court, and the Jesuits, unite to crush the efforts of this valiant Judith. Though unassisted and alone, far from shrinking from this unpopular and most arduous office, or from trembling at the frowns of the great, she not only stood her ground, armed with the panoply of a good conscience, but followed them into their secret retirements, and unfolded before their eyes the flagrant iniquity of their conduct. Nay, she often spent two or three hours at a time with the Cardinal de Noailles, pleading the cause of the nuns; and after their final dispersion, though her hopes were crushed, her kindness, piety, and courage were still equally industrious and persevering, in making the best use of every means in her power to mitigate the rigours of their captivity.

When the pensions of the exiled nuns were not paid, and when they suffered, in consequence, from a privation of the common necessities of life, Mademoiselle de Joncoux continually sent them pieces of serge, broadcloth, linens, and every comfort she could procure. At length, by dint of reiterated endeavours, and much address, she found means, in some instances, to open a correspondence with the captives, which enabled her to discover, and to

publish to the whole world, the iniquitous artifices which were used to induce them to violate their conscience. When a pretended list of their signatures \* was published by the Jesuits, she engaged M. de Fouillon to publish a work against them. It was her industry which collected, and her zeal which furnished, all the documents which completely refuted and exposed the imposture; and it was mainly owing to her exertions in giving notoriety to the truth, that the public mind was so totally changed with respect to Port Royal.

Such was the state of affairs, when, at the death of Louis, and immediately on the beginning of the Regency, the friends of Port Royal united with this lady in petitioning for the redress of those grievances under which the Port Royal nuns laboured. As their monastery was rased, and their revenues dissipated by their persecutors, their friends conceived the idea of uniting the captives in one and the same convent, that they might spend the short remainder of their days in each other's society. Various objections were at first raised against this benevolent

\* Soon after the dispersion of the nuns, a list of the signatures of several was published. On investigation it appeared, that in some instances of paralytic imbecility, the hands of the nuns had been guided by their persecutors; in all the other instances but one, retractions were formally made by the nuns, who positively denied ever having lent their names to the papers published. One nun alone, Madame de Vavaseur, made no retraction.

scheme; but, by dint of unwearied perseverance, and of that charity which overcometh all things, Mademoiselle de Joncoux, and the friends of Port Royal, at length succeeded.

Scarcely had success crowned this good work, when Mademoiselle de Joncoux was called to the eternal reward of her labours.\*

It had indeed been determined, that the remaining captive nuns should be united together in the same convent; but so many years had now elapsed since the destruction of Port Royal, that most of its per-

\* The life of this lady, Clemencet observes, is a desideratum in Christian and literary biography. There are many points of view in which it would be singularly interesting. Her connexion and contests with many of the leading characters of the day would furnish a variety of interesting and edifying anecdote; and her piety, learning, and talents render her a bright example to her sex, and an honourable and rare instance of the best human gifts, exerted in a divine cause. We insert her epitaph:—

Sub hoc marmore quiescit  
 Virgo nobilis FRANCISCA MARGARITA DE JONCOUX,  
 Virginum in sæculo degentium decus,  
 Præstanti sagacique ingenio prædita,  
 Tempore quo abundabat iniquitas  
 Non refriguit, sed effervuit ejus caritas;  
 Pro justitia et veritate agonisantibus  
 Fugitivis captivis aut exulibus,  
 Mira dexteritate adfuit,  
 Summa benignitate consuluit;  
 Sanctimonialium in extremis positarum  
 Amica fidelis, mater provida, ultrix impavida.  
 His atque aliis operibus intenta  
 Supremum diem obiit  
 V. Kal. oct. an MDCCXV. ætat 47.

secuted inhabitants had for ever left this world of troubles. Five of them only were united in the abbey of the Benedictines of Malnoue, one of the most respected communities in France, for its regularity, and for the spirit of poverty, retirement, union, and charity which reigned there. These nuns were, Mesdames Le Juge, Couturier, Bertrande, Basilise, and D'Afflon.

The sisters of Malnoue received the nuns of Port Royal in a spirit according with the exhortation of St. Paul; and those whom they entertained as strangers, proved to be to them angels indeed, received unawares.

The nuns were welcomed, and treated in a manner which was well calculated to make them forget the bitterness of their long captivity, and to mitigate those deep sorrows which could not be removed — the loss of their friends, and the destruction of their house. They formed, in the midst of the abbey of Malnoue, a little Port Royal, of which Madame de Couturier was the head; and light and fervour, and an abundance of spiritual blessings, were soon diffused, by their Christian example, over the house which had received them so kindly; so that in this instance, as in that of Cornelius, the charities of the sisters of Malnoue rising in remembrance before GOD, were rewarded by an influx of spiritual light, which led to the conversion of the greater portion of this amiable and worthy community.

Many years after, a nun of the convent of Malnoue thus wrote of them: "I have only had the honour and happiness of being acquainted with these eminently holy and blessed persons, since they came amongst us. Although their residence with us has been extended to many years, yet we can give you no account of any of the sufferings and vexations they endured elsewhere, because their humility and Christian charity never allowed them to mention, or even to allude to them. It was our endeavour that they should have nothing to suffer with us, but the recollection of the past. Their abode with us has been a blessing to the whole house, and they are a continual means of instruction and edification to every one of us. They lead a uniform, retired life. They are continually occupied in prayer, or in studying the scriptures, excepting when they are engaged in working for the community, or the poor, or in performing other acts of charity. Exact in conforming to all our regulations, they are always punctual, both to time and to the most minute of our observances, at service, public prayer, refectory, &c. They are, above all, distinguished by their candour, simplicity, and deep humility, and a certain dignity of truth, which may be said to be impressed upon their manners, and written on their countenances. Their self-abasement is equally deep and sincere; it is not indeed continually in their speech, as is



the custom with many religious professors, but all their manners and actions bear witness that they, of a truth, believe themselves to be most weak and fallible. They may be called *truly great*, as religious characters, never seeking applause or distinction, nor undertaking any extraordinary or remarkable acts of penance or mortification, but doing apparently common things, with a most remarkable and uncommon fidelity and spirituality.

“ All human life is really made up of a succession of little occupations and duties, which, without tedious minuteness, could not be related: but, in reality, it is a constant fidelity, in the aggregate of these little things, that forms the true greatness, and grandeur, and solidity, of the Christian character. Their venerable superior, Madame de Couturier, was paralytic on one side, and could not therefore walk without much difficulty. She always, however, contrived to drag herself to all the observances of the community. She often spoke of the great and venerable Mère Angélique, and was indeed her worthy follower in all things. It is difficult to describe a piety so eminent, that it influences the beholder progressively by its sublime constancy, rather than dazzles by any sudden impression: I can then only, in one word, say of them every one, that we do not any of us recollect a moment, since they have been with us, in which they did not seem present with

GOD by recollection, and with their sisters by a genuine spirit of Christian love. This is all I can tell you of them. All was interior; supremely loving and reverencing GOD from choice; always speaking of Him fervently, and in Him loving each other and us with an equable, divine love.

“ Each one of them made a blessed and edifying end.”

## CHAP. V.

MADAME DE VALOIS.

THE Sœur Magdalène de St. Gertrude de Valois was by far the most eminent of the nuns of Port Royal who lived to be recalled.

This lady, whose name announces the dignity of her birth, was distinguished for super-eminent abilities, high accomplishments, and for manners equally polished and dignified. Early introduced into the first circles of Paris, she had scarcely tasted the pleasures of the world, when she became convinced of their vanity; and just as her parents were on the point of concluding a match for her, the splendour of which was suitable to her rank, she suddenly formed a resolution to quit the world, and to devote herself entirely to the service of God.

Her family were in habits of intimacy with M. Arnauld, which acquaintance and a frequent perusal of the two admirable works of the Mère Agnès, “The Perfect Religious,” and “The Constitutions

of Port Royal," determined her choice, and inspired her with a peculiar predilection for this monastery.

She accordingly presented herself as a postulant, and entreated with ardour, permission to consecrate herself to God in that house.

The reverend Mère Angélique de St. Jean was at that time mistress of the novices. This excellent spiritual mother, well aware, by experience, of the heavy persecutions the house had sustained, and would probably have again to undergo; and knowing Mademoiselle de Valois' resolution to have been sudden, thought it right to lay before her a full view of the two-fold difficulty with which she would have to contend — that of assuming the rigours and discipline of a strict monastic order, after habits of luxury and dissipation; and that of continuing steadfast and immovable in the heat of persecution, amidst subtleties and artifices, which were enough to deceive the very elect, and to subvert even the old who were established in the faith.

But the more Mademoiselle de Valois was told of these difficulties, the more was her zeal increased and her resolution strengthened to enter the monastery. She was accordingly received, and entered upon her noviciate with ardour and firmness, grounded in a depth of humility, and a degree of holy confidence in GOD, which gave earnest of the solidity of her vocation. In fact, every mountain

was removed by the fervency of her faith, every valley was exalted, and all the rough places became smooth before her. Silence, watching, fasting, obedience, and humiliations were her delight. Soon after her entrance into the monastery, she was seized with a violent and dangerous fit of illness, so that her life was despaired of. This attack was attributed to her having unadvisedly, and contrary to the usual practice, assumed at once all the austerities of the religious life. She was brought down to the very brink of the grave. But in these heart-searching circumstances, her abiding peace and sweet tranquillity of mind clearly manifested the sincerity of her conversion, and she prepared for death in the fullest assurance of faith.

The danger, however, was transient; though, after it was removed, both her friends and the community were of one opinion, that she never would be able to endure the austerity of the rule. The abbess of Port Royal therefore at once informed her friends, that notwithstanding the eminent qualities of *Mademoiselle de Valois*, and their high estimate of her merits, it became impossible, under the circumstances which had just occurred, to receive her, unless a consultation of physicians were held, and they should return a favourable report as to the state of her health and the strength of her constitution. No sooner was the young postulant apprized of the

abbess's determination, than the deepest grief manifested itself in her countenance. She listened, however, in respectful silence; and then going into the choir, prostrated herself at the foot of the altar, and, bathed in tears, earnestly prayed to GOD to take her future destiny under the direction of His peculiar providence, and so to over-rule the voices of those who should consult, that their decision might be for that state of life in which she could be most faithful to divine grace. She then concluded by a solemn appeal to the Father of Spirits, and Searcher of Hearts, beseeching, that if, in His fore-knowledge, He saw that she would prove unfaithful amidst the temptations of the world, that He would be pleased, in mercy, rather to remove her by death, than permit her to return to it.

Mademoiselle de Valois' friends having taken proper advice, her health in the meantime became so completely re-established, that it was decided she might safely enter the monastery, and that by a more cautious beginning, she would, no doubt, be soon enabled to bear all the austerity of the rule. She was soon after formally admitted; and in the year 1677, she recommenced her noviciate with equal devotion and fervour. She passed through all its trials with a fidelity and zeal which were truly edifying, and was on the point of consummating her sacrifice, by taking the black veil and final vow, when the Mère Angé-



lique de St. Jean, who was then abbess, foreseeing that another storm was about to burst on Port Royal, determined to lay before her a full view of all the difficulties to which she would expose herself.

She represented to her very forcibly, all the dangers, difficulties, perils, and persecutions to which Port Royal was then exposed; recounted to her their former exile, and the rigorous captivities of many of the nuns; and observed, that she would assuredly find herself grievously deceived if she looked for her strength in the example and fellowship of a large religious community, instead of fixing her single eye on Christ alone. The abbess informed her that in the persecutions which were past, they had not only been separated from each other, but many of them had passed three or four years in solitary confinement, and that the remainder of the community had seen the exterior of their monastery invested with soldiers, and the interior occupied by strange nuns, placed there as gaolers, who watched them in such a manner, as to preclude all Christian fellowship or comfortable communication as effectually as if they had been really separated. "In short," she said, "the persecution of 1664 has taught us, by experience, the necessity of examining our foundations, and of ascertaining whether in very deed we were rooted and grounded in Christ Himself, and not in the mere habituation to our rule. Every nun amongst


us must be prepared singly, and without assistance from others, to meet persecutions, and to sustain combats, dangers, and difficulties, in solitude and exile." She added, that her novices being fully informed of what the community had undergone, and probably might have to encounter in future, it would be an inexcusable presumption in them to lay the foundation, unless they had fully counted the enormous cost of finishing the building. She showed her that a very uncommon degree of faith could alone justify a person in voluntarily exposing herself to difficulties, dangers, and temptations so far beyond the common austerities of any monastic order; she therefore insisted upon her taking some days to consider very prayerfully what had been pointed out; and concluded by exhorting her, in the most solemn manner, to sound her heart thoroughly before God, to beseech Him to search it as with candles; and by no means hastily, or without a full conviction that it was really required of her, to entangle herself in a maze of snares, out of which the wisdom which is from above could alone extricate her: or to expose herself to a weight of persecutions, which those who had experienced them could assure her, that only a very uncommon degree of the grace of God, and a very uncommon degree of fidelity in corresponding to it, could possibly enable her to sustain. "In short, again," said the abbess, "I most solemnly

exhort you to count the full cost before you venture to lay the first stone; and in the holy presence of GOD, who searches the secret motives of every heart, I now, in His name, declare to you, that you are inexcusable, if you voluntarily assume a calling in which all your difficulties and temptations will be increased an hundredfold, unless you believe that GOD really requires it of you, and that His Spirit has pointed out this, and this only, as the path on which you, individually, are called to enter." The abbess having thus exhorted her young novice, Mademoiselle de Valois answered, without hesitation, " That she was fully aware of all the abbess had represented; that she had weighed it well, and was firmly convinced it was her duty to enter that holy community." She added, " That she should consider it equally a happiness and a glory to partake in such sufferings for Christ's sake; that she felt assured that His grace was sufficient for her; that divine strength would be perfected in her weakness, and that she should esteem herself most happy, were she counted worthy to shed the last drop of her blood for Him who had shed his infinitely meritorious blood for her."

In these dispositions did Mademoiselle de Valois take the veil, in the twenty-second year of her age, and the Lord did not fail to shed abundant benedictions upon one on whom He had bestowed such a preparation of heart.

The proofs of the solidity of her vocation were manifest from the very beginning of her engagement. All the Christian graces seemed united to the brilliant natural gifts by which she was distinguished. She set no bounds to her penance but those formed by obedience. And, if the rigour of her austerities appeared excessive to her companions, whose short-sighted vision only comprehended the present time ; the terrible persecutions and bodily sufferings, by which her faith was afterwards tried, leave no doubt upon the Christian mind, that she was thus mercifully prepared for her uncommon sufferings, as by an holy apprenticeship, which disciplined alike her body and her mind. During severe winters, she not only deprived herself of the comfort of ever approaching the fire, but she habituated herself continually to sleep on the floor of her cell, and generally limited her time for rest to five hours.

Though naturally of a feeble and delicate constitution, she embraced with joy occupations not only the most humiliating, but the most arduous and laborious. Humility—that love of being abased and counted as nothing—without which all penance and austerities are only vices in a specious disguise, was deeply rooted and grounded in her heart. It seemed, indeed, the very brightest star in the constellation of virtues and talents which adorned her character. The habitual and deep conviction of her manifold



infidelities seemed always present with her. She was not content with annihilating herself before GOD, but she embraced every sort and occasion of humiliation, that she might effectually overcome the desire of praise which is less or more the besetment of all.

If the virtues of Madame de Valois shone thus brightly amongst the great lights of Port Royal, they beamed forth with redoubled effulgence, when among the children of darkness, with whom her lot was afterwards cast. Indeed it appeared as though GOD had showered down upon her His graces in a yet more abundant manner, after she was finally torn away from her beloved community and her holy and blissful seclusion. Her trials, great as they were, instead of overpowering her, only served to manifest the strength of her faith. She arrived, on the 20th of November, 1709, at the convent of the Filles Dieu, at Chartres, which was the place of her destination. This monastery was so violently prejudiced against Port Royal, that it would not open its doors to receive her ; and Madame de Valois was compelled to remain in her carriage in the street till four o'clock in the morning, before the bishop's mandate could be procured, which they were then, though very unwillingly, compelled to obey. In this monastery, she might truly be said to be placed in the midst of her enemies. She was immediately conducted to a

cold damp cell, where she was immured under lock and key. The whole house considered her as an obstinate heretic of the very worst description; and not one member of the community would associate with her, or even speak to her, without the most urgent necessity. Her health, as has been observed, was always delicate, and the hardships she endured had rendered it peculiarly infirm. In this distressing condition, in ill health and in deep sorrow, she did not even receive the good offices of common humanity. Torn from her mothers and sisters, and from the beloved house where she had so many spiritual privileges, she was now a captive in a strange house, where she was rigidly guarded, wholly deprived of books and of work, and condemned to a horrible and unvarying solitude, except, indeed, when it was interrupted by the visits of priests, prelates, and Jesuits, who exhausted all their menaces, flatteries, or subtleties, to induce her to betray her conscience, and to sign the objectionable formulary. Their visits were usually succeeded by one from the abbess, who sincerely thought she was doing GOD service by using every means in her power to further their iniquitous designs.

Not even the languor of disease protected Madame de Valois from their reiterated persecutions; and many times, when she was so ill as to be believed to be nearly dying, they were not only always at hand



to weary and assail her by constant unkindnesses and vexatious chicaneries, but they did not scruple to endeavour to stagger her faith by giving her false accounts of her sisters, and trying to make her believe that they had renounced the truth. At these times she wept bitterly, and at first giving credence to their lies, she would say, "Whatever others are so unfortunate as to do, the word of GOD cannot be broken; by it I must abide. He has declared, thou shalt not bear false witness, and His word remains the same, though every one of the children of men should alter; let GOD be true and every man a liar."

In this house Madame de Valois had to encounter hardships of nearly every description that can afflict human nature; and it would be, perhaps, difficult to determine, whether her mental, or her corporal sufferings, were most severe. Some idea of her sufferings may be gathered from one instance, which the nuns themselves afterwards related. It has been already observed, that the winter of 1709 was the most intense which had taken place for above two centuries. During its whole course, Madame de Valois was not allowed any fire; and this privation was rendered more cruel, as the packet containing her change of raiment, and her winter clothing—having been put by mistake into another carriage, which took it elsewhere—was not restored to her for above eight months. A charitable lady, who boarded at the

convent, had the kindness to send Madame de Valois some wool to make under garments; but she was obliged to go without any, till she had, with her own hands, spun, woven, and made them. With respect to spiritual concerns, her state was still worse; she was neither allowed to join the other nuns at divine service, nor was she furnished by them with books of devotion, before the arrival of her packet. No priest would receive her confession, nor administer to her the sacraments, though they continually urged her to sign the formulary, that she might participate in them. Her sentiments on this head, may be gathered from the large collection of her papers which yet remain; and in writing which, as it will afterwards appear, she found means to beguile many hours of her solitary captivity; in one of them she speaks in the following strain: \*

“The privation of the holy Eucharist, O Lord, sensibly affects me: yet will I endeavour continually to look to Thee, the GOD of all consolation, for comfort under so severe a trial. Thou, Lord, who searchest the heart, seest the position in which I am placed, in reference to this divine banquet, a participation in which would be the greatest consolation, and would

\* This is not a literal translation, though it might pass for such if read successively, without being compared with the original.

make every other suffering light ; yet even this privation I look upon as coming from Thy hands, and as a part of the order of Thy providence ; and I will not distrust Thy grace, which is all sufficient to sustain me under it. Yet, O Lord, look down upon me ; look down upon me in mercy, and comfort me under the weight of my redoubled affliction. If I cannot have fellowship with my sisters, in partaking of Thy most sacred body, and of Thy most precious blood, enable me, O Lord, to have fellowship and communion with Thee, in Thy sufferings : *Thy sufferings* which are the *whole of our merits*, and which form our *sole plea of mercy* before the throne of God. By and through them alone it is that we are redeemed from death, and become living members of Jesus Christ, through whom we are able to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to Him.\*

“ In all ages of the church, some of Thy children have been prevented by Thy providence, from assisting in this sacrifice. Such is now my state ; but Thy great mercy, O Lord, has now given me to see by Thy light in my understanding, what I have long had the blessed experience of in my heart ; that we are by no means less participants of the benefits of

\* Je communierai aux souffrances de Jésus Christ, que *font* tous nos mérites. C'est par *elles* que nous sommes les membres vivans de Jésus Christ, et c'est par l'union à ce divin chef que l'on est un même corps, &c. &c.

the sacrifice in spirit, though we may not partake of the external elements. There is but *one sacrifice* for sin, even the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which sacrifice was only dimly discerned, by all the saints of olden times. Still those who offered to Thee a burnt offering, although they did not eat of the flesh of the victim, which was consumed by fire; nevertheless, the sacrifice was acceptable in Thy sight; and Thou didst accept of those who offered it because of the merits of Christ, and pouring Thy Spirit upon them, thou didst testify that acceptance, by Thy peace shed abroad in their hearts, and by the fruits of sanctification exhibited in their lives. Thus may its great antitype, the one true Eternal Sacrifice for sin, become acceptable and available for me; whilst I communicate, not by an outward handling of the body and blood according to Thy institution, but by an inward spiritual communion, through faith, in the spirit and sufferings of my Lord and Saviour. As in the day of crucifixion, those who were the very agents of making the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, did yet not partake in its benefits; not having faith in their hearts; so may the plenitude of Thy grace, O Lord, enable me, by faith, to offer the true sacrifice for sin acceptably, though I cannot partake of it bodily. I not only then hope, but I trust, with full assurance,

to obtain the pardon of all my sins and all other divine benefits, in offering by faith Jesus Christ, the alone true victim for the expiation of *all* sin; and by such a communion, I also trust my inward man will be renewed day by day, so that I shall find grace to help in time of need; and that as my day, so shall my strength be. In short, I trust to participate in all the graces of those who do exteriorly communicate; not but that I esteem those most happy indeed, who do enjoy this privilege; yet I thus occupy myself, to moderate my excessive grief; and in my desolation I seek to communicate in spirit through the power of the Spirit of God, who is emphatically termed the Comforter, and who our Lord has promised shall abide with us for ever. Mary Magdalene sought the body of Christ in the tomb, and wept when she found it not, forgetting, that although men might take away His body, yet, that by His divine power, and His Divine Spirit, He is always present to every one who loves Him in sincerity. And has He not been graciously pleased to say, ‘Lo, I am with you always’ (that is, with the disciples who love Him), ‘even unto the end of the world.’ I love thee, O Lord; be Thou then, O Lord, with me, and let me still be a partaker of Thy mercy. If I receive thee not outwardly, whilst on earth, in the Eucharist, I shall in bliss behold Thy glory in heaven. Ransomed by Thy blood, I shall

then behold, face to face, Him whom now I see only as through a glass darkly, but whom, though not fully seeing, I love; nay, I shall not only see, but joining the redeemed throng, I shall, to all eternity, praise Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; Who was slain, and has redeemed us to GOD by His blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. My tears indeed, for a season, are my meat, day and night, whilst they continually say to me, ‘where is Thy GOD?’ Deep indeed calls unto deep; all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me, and I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime; I shall yet praise Him who is health of my countenance and my GOD, and in the meantime, this comforting assurance sustains me. I sometimes console myself by the remembrance of the centurion; he felt himself unworthy that our Lord’s bodily presence should enter into his house; yet believing in His almighty power, his prayer was answered, and it was done unto him according to his faith.”

Such were the sentiments of this admirable nun, but the firmness with which she conducted herself towards men, was not less remarkable than her humility before GOD. The latter, indeed may be considered as the ground of the former.



On being continually tormented by the Jesuits to sign the formulary, as the price of her receiving the sacraments, "Reverend fathers," she replied, "falsehood and perjury can never be the fitting preparation to receive the GOD of truth."

Some of them exhorting her to alter her sentiments, and telling her that her conscience should be reformed, she answered, "All conscience is founded upon the word of GOD, who is without variation or shadow of turning, and whose word is immutable, and cannot be broken. When the conscience is once formed, it therefore cannot be RE-formed."

Another time, on their exhorting her to consult the opinion of many learned men of their body, she said, "Conscience must be solidly grounded, formed upon the rock of the word of GOD, and not be continually reformed on the shifting sands of the versatile notions of men: a religious conscience cannot be established on versatile opinions; for we are no more to be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men." "Again, reverend fathers, the will of GOD is the foundation of all conscience; now GOD is truth, and truth is immutable. So likewise will the faith and conscience of men be, if they be really founded upon it. GOD alone is the rock of ages. His word alone is the foundation on which to build our religious edifice; and as every foundation must in its own nature be

ruinous, which is erected on the perishable basis of human opinion, so must that ever continue unshaken, which is founded on the word of GOD."

Notwithstanding these explicit, and repeated declarations of Madame de Valois, the persecution was still continued against her. The bishop of Chartres, the clergy, the Jesuits, as well as the nuns, assaulted her on every side. She generally listened in silence, and when their burthensome visits were terminated, went, and at the foot of the altar, poured out her heart in supplication before GOD; beseeching Him earnestly, and with many tears, rather to let her die, than have the misfortune of abandoning the truth. Thus she went on, running with admirable patience the race set before her, strengthening her faith by looking continually unto Him, who is the author and finisher of it. She waited patiently on GOD, and therefore was her strength renewed — therefore did her soul mount up as with eagle's wings, above the sorrows of time, and gaze as with eagle eye upon the Sun of Righteousness; and amidst want, hardships and illness — amidst injuries, menaces, the most opprobrious language, and the most harsh treatment, did the GOD whom she served, strengthen her to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.

Sometimes she was threatened with being immured in a dungeon. "As it pleases your Lordship," replied she to the bishop of Chartres, "I trust the

GOD of truth will protect and deliver me amidst all. If you immure me in a dungeon, truth will descend there with me; and He who is the GOD of truth, will both console me, and make me truly free amidst captivity; and if you put me to death, you will only make me a martyr for the truth, which is a glory of which I am altogether unworthy."

Respect for the sanctuary, prevents the relation of the injurious and opprobrious language the prelate heaped upon her in reply: he seemed to forget the character, not only of his sacred profession, but even of a gentleman and a man, in the foul and contumelious virulence with which in his frenzy, he loaded his unfortunate female captive. Suffice it to say, that he threatened her with the most horrible torments, if she did not consent to violate her conscience. On one occasion the prelate took away all her prints and books of devotion. "My Lord," replied the captive nun, "your Lordship cannot take away from me the spirit of prayer, and that suffices me." During the early part of her captivity, she was continually harassed by the visits of this prelate, which generally lasted more than two hours. After a time, Madame de Valois finding that these reiterated visits were spent in repeating the same things over and over again, adopted the expedient of sitting down quietly to her spinning, and making no reply. He once threatened that he would send her

to some remote place, and exile her from his diocese ; to which she answered with a good-humoured smile, “that his Lordship could not do her a greater pleasure.” He then said, that he should deprive her soul of the benefits of the sacraments at the hour of death, and that her body should be thrown out on the dunghill. At this last threat she smiled, and said, “well, I do not think your Lordship will be able to discover any place to cast my body, where our Saviour will not be able to find it, and raise it up at the last day ; and, if in the meantime, my soul be happy in heaven, it is of very little importance where my body is cast.” “But, my Lord,” continued she, more gravely, “if at the awful hour of death, I should be unjustly deprived of those assistances, which the church grants to all her children, by means of priests, who should be the servants of GOD ; then GOD Himself, will by His grace, immediately and abundantly supply their instrumentality. His divine power is no more to be circumscribed by the will of man, than His love by the want of charity in man. I know indeed that it is most painful to approach the awful hour of death, without an outward participation in the sacraments ; but it is better dying, to enter into heaven (though without sacraments) for the cause of truth ; than by receiving the sacraments, to be cited to irrevocable judgment, for committing perjury.”

When the bishop announced to her that some of her sisters had signed, she wept bitterly in silence, but remained unmoved; and one day being much pressed and tormented to make some reply, she rose — and then with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, kneeling down, exclaimed, “O Lord, maintain me, I beseech thee, by Thy all-sufficient grace; and rather permit me to die than to be unfaithful to Thee.”

Such was the uniform conduct of Madame de Valois. Many years afterwards, when she was interrogated how she had proved faithful under a series of difficulties, almost beyond the endurance of human nature, she replied, “Thanks be to the grace of GOD alone! yet amongst means, two appear to me to have been attended with a peculiar blessing. One is, to ground our apprehension of duty in every instance on the word of GOD; where this is done, our sense of duty will not vary with our frames and feelings, but will uniformly bear the sanction of divine authority. The second is, when an action or a duty is so grounded, never to reason with the enemy; but to consider, that if GOD has declared His will, that declaration supersedes all motives, however plausible, by which every one of His creatures might urge the contrary. Our first parents fell by reasoning with the enemy, and the man of GOD of Bethel lost his life, because he

listened to the voice, even of a prophet, in contradiction to that GOD, which had already spoken to him individually."

The bishop of Chartres finding his endeavours unattended with the least success, gradually desisted from his visits. He however sent his ecclesiastics in his place, who often came, and endeavoured to argue the point with Madame de Valois for two or three hours at a time.

In process of time, these persecutions produced an effect exactly the reverse of what was intended. The nuns belonging to the convent where Madame de Valois was placed, though unenlightened and prejudiced, were by no means ill-intentioned. The gentleness and uniform kindness of Madame de Valois' manner, gradually won their hearts; her stability and firmness began to make a very deep impression upon them, and the respect and attention they paid her became daily more and more marked.

The abbess was the first who endeavoured to console her, and to diversify her captivity, by daily permitting both the principal nuns, and the boarders in the convent, to go and sit with her. Her eminent piety, her highly cultivated mind, and her amiable manners very soon gained her the affection of the whole house, and they all thought they never could do enough to show their repentance, for having



at first treated her in a manner so harsh and unfeeling. Two ladies especially, who boarded in the convent, became most tenderly attached to her, and, by means of their kindness, she was enabled to correspond with all her friends. So strong was their attachment, and so truly disinterested their friendship, that during the time she was persecuted by the bishop's myrmidons, they had remained a whole year in the convent, without once visiting the country in the summer, or Paris in winter, that they might always be on the spot to assist and console her, and to enable her to carry on her correspondence with her friends.

At length, the prelate seeing that Madame de Valois had been tormented year after year in vain, and that all his persecutions were so far from gaining her, that he seemed more likely to lose the whole house, he now determined to reduce her to a close captivity; and, accordingly, forbade that she should have any intercourse with any person in the house, except the servant appointed to wait upon her, and ordered that she should never quit her cell, but at the time of divine service.

This most cruel command the abbess was compelled to execute, but she did it with the greatest reluctance and grief, as she had become most tenderly attached to her prisoner.

Madame de Valois heard the order in silence, and

when the key was turned in the door of her little cell, she prostrated herself before GOD, and anew dedicated herself to Him.

In the afternoon the door opened, and to her great surprise, the abbess again appeared. She expressed her astonishment, adding, that she thought only the servant was to have access to her. "For that reason, my dear sister," said the abbess, handing her the coffee, "I have henceforth the pleasure of being that servant;" and, accordingly, every morning and evening, she brought her meals, with unwearied assiduity; and then, sitting down and taking her own with her, endeavoured by every kind attention and soothing discourse, to mitigate her desolate captivity.

The abbess, however, could not prolong her visits for any length of time, consistently with the duties of her office; and one day, being much engaged, so that her stay was necessarily shorter than usual, the kind-hearted abbess, brought a cage with two beautiful little canary birds, she had tamed on purpose that Madame de Valois might have something to interest her, and set it down on her table, with tears in her eyes. Madame de Valois, who never willingly referred to any of the hardships she had endured, often afterwards mentioned these two acts of kindness as having touched her heart beyond anything she had ever experienced; and she who had been un-

moved by years of persecution, could never mention these two little incidents without tears. But Madame de Valois had yet other trials to encounter ; her difficulties seemed to increase in proportion to the strength of her faith, and she now began to find that it required a yet more abundant degree of grace to withstand the distress and tears, and reiterated solicitations of her friends, than to continue unshaken amidst the hardships and persecutions inflicted by her enemies.

The kind abbess, the two ladies who were her particular friends, and indeed the whole convent, whilst they revered her piety, did not enter into the motives of her scruples. They were perhaps amongst the number of those sincerely good, but mistaken persons, who measure duty rather by the consequences an action involves, than from the principle from which it flows.

They must indeed have been aware, that the signature of a formulary, containing a decision on a work which they had never read, was the assertion (and that too upon oath) of a fact, concerning which they were ignorant, and that too involving the condemnation of a bishop of the church. But, as that bishop was out of the reach of being injured by it, they probably thought it as not worth while to bear persecution for a truth, unless that truth in some way affected the interests of others.

Madame de Valois thought differently. God had expressly declared, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour;" and she received His command in all its plenitude; without resorting to any of those palliations, to which some persons might have had recourse under such peculiar circumstances.

The abbess, and the two ladies who could now seldom have access to her, began to be exceedingly uneasy lest she should die under the rigour of her captivity. The latter earnestly and importunately besought her by letter, and the former by word of mouth, to give up that which, though true, was not a truth involving important consequences, and to sign the formulary. The abbess, especially, used prayers, tears, and supplication. "O, my dear sister," she would say, "if you will not pity yourself, pity me. Will you that I should have the misery of occasioning the death of my friend? If you should, even by accident, die in this captivity, I should never survive my grief." By such motives did she affectionately urge her prisoner. Nor were the two ladies less importunate; one of them, indeed, suffered so exceedingly from her anxiety on Madame de Valois' account, that she was reduced to the brink of the grave by a nervous fever. In this state when her life was despaired of, she was seized with the most earnest desire once more to see Madame de Valois, who had been the blessed instrument of her conver-

sion. This permission was refused, unless Madame de Valois consented to sign the formulary. She was entreated by the abbess in the most pathetic manner, not to refuse a peaceful death-bed to her devoted friend, for the sake of a fact of little importance. Madame de Valois herself was most tenderly attached to this lady ; her soul was agonised by the urgent representations of the abbess, and such horrible doubt and amazement came upon her, that, in the anguish of her distress, she knew not what to do. After a pause, she begged the abbess to leave her for a little, when she prostrated herself before GOD in the utmost agony of soul. This, indeed, she often said, afterwards, was the hour of darkness. In this state she remained a long time, nor could the anguish of her mind find any utterance, but in the words used by our Lord. She earnestly prayed that this bitter cup might if possible pass from her, but that the will of GOD might be done, and that He might permit her to die rather than she should belie her conscience or renounce His truth. After several hours, Madame de Valois opened her door, and admitted the abbess. With a countenance perfectly composed, but on which were the evident traces of the terrible conflict she had undergone ; and in a voice tranquil and calm, but almost inaudible from the agony she had passed through, she declared her determination to adhere to her conscience. “ Men,”

she said, “ cannot interrupt the true communion of saints, which is in spirit, not in bodily presence only ; I am therefore going to prostrate myself before God, in prayer, for our dear friend. I have one favour to ask, which is, that my retirement may not be broken in upon at present.” Accordingly, her prayer was never interrupted but once, to take a small portion of food, till the next day, when she learnt that the crisis was past, and that her friend was out of danger. Thus did this admirable nun remain unshaken, either by the menaces of her enemies, or the solicitations of her friends.

The Bishop of Chartres, seeing he could prevail nothing, resolved to rid himself of so troublesome a charge, by devolving it upon somebody else. After some deliberation, he determined to transfer Made-moiselle de Valois to a convent at Mantes, the superior of which was violently prejudiced against Port Royal, and had been successfully employed in persuading several of the nuns to sign the formulary. M. de Chartres was not without considerable hopes that Madame de Valois might also be persuaded by being placed under the same influence. She was accordingly sent from Chartres, under an escort, a woman accompanying her in the same carriage, partly to watch her movements, and partly as an attendant.

On her journey from Chartres to Mantes, Madame



de Valois was grievously distressed in mind. A depression and horrible fear came over her, when she recollected how many, even amongst Christians of the first ages of the Church, had fallen during the severity of persecution; and calling to mind the character which had been given to her, of the abbess of the monastery whither she was going, she began to fear that she never should prove faithful to the end, and she almost wished that some accident might happen on the road, which might be the means of terminating her sufferings and her life together, preferring rather to die than to forfeit her integrity.

Early in the afternoon, Madame de Valois reached the town where she was to lodge that night. She had scarcely arrived, when a carriage drove up to the door of the inn, accompanied by servants, splendidly mounted and accoutred. A young lady, in full dress, stepped out, and asked to be immediately conducted to the Port Royal nun, who had just arrived. The stranger appeared to be under twenty, her dress, which was magnificent, sparkled with diamonds and precious stones, her countenance was radiant with beauty, and her manners, though gentle, were awfully severe, so that the persons present, overawed by her appearance, immediately admitted her. She instantly went up stairs, entered Madame de Valois' room, and without either

announcing herself, or prefacing her visit with any apology, or appearing to notice Madame de Valois' attendant, who had thrown herself upon a bed to rest, she took the nun by the hand, and led her aside to the window, where she at once began to speak to her of the high dignity and honour, and super-eminent distinction, conferred upon those who are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, and who prove steadfast to the end. She then continued exhorting, strengthening, and consoling her, in a manner so full of majesty, grace, and goodness, blended with such awful severity, that the nun was in equal astonishment, both at the manner and matter of her discourse. She informed her of the blessed end of many of her sisters, and of the great change which was taking place in the public mind about Port Royal, and many other circumstances, of which Madame de Valois had been kept in profound ignorance; at length, after giving Madame de Valois a most solemn charge, and exhorting her to be faithful to the end, she, without awaiting any reply, or taking any leave, stepped into her carriage, which setting off at full speed, was quickly out of sight, leaving Madame de Valois in the utmost amazement.

There was an extraordinary dignity in the manner of her unknown visitor, which, joined to the surprise occasioned by so unexpected an incident, prevented

the nun from interrupting her discourse, by asking her who, or what she was, or whence she came ; but when Madame de Valois had recovered her recollectedness, she sent to question the people of the inn. They, however, were as much surprised as herself, nor could she gain the least trace of intelligence concerning this extraordinary visitant. Nevertheless, whoever she might be, her zeal and the force and earnestness of her manner, filled the heart of Madame de Valois with peace, consolation, and strength, so that the very recollection of this singular incident, fortified and supported her during the three remaining years of her captivity, which she had yet to pass at Mantes.

On her arrival there, Madame de Valois was treated with the greatest severity, but in a very few months, she gained, as at Chartres, the esteem and affection of the whole convent ; and there is every reason to believe, that the rapidity with which this change took place, was owing in a great measure to the repeated letters which were sent to the superior by her kind friend the abbess of Chartres, as well as by the two ladies who had given her so many proofs of their affection. To whatever cause, however, we may ascribe it, the event is certain ; that she soon gained the affection and confidence of the whole community. One of the nuns has left us an account, of which the substance is as follows : —

“ At the time Madame de Valois was sent to us by the Bishop of Chartres, we received letters (from her friend the abbess) describing her as a person of the utmost sweetness and evenness of temper, who, from her natural disposition, as well as from the influence of religion, was most engaging and agreeable to live with. Her goodness, as well as the strength and intelligence of a superior mind, was visible the first moment she entered the house, and her application to acquaint herself with all the usages of our community, and to conform herself to them, even in the most minute particulars, soon obtained her the high esteem and regard of every individual. Madame de Valois might indeed thank GOD, for having given to her, as He formerly did to Solomon, the spirit of wisdom, and of knowledge, in large measure ; and as her rare intellectual powers had been cultivated by assiduous study, so her naturally happy temper was perfected by being grounded on Christian resignation and deep self-abasement. The long exercise of every Christian virtue, had induced a perfection of holiness, such as we have never witnessed in anyone else. She was always most exact in attending church, during the time of divine service. She was not, as you know, allowed to be a partaker of the holy communion, but she always remained prostrate during the whole time of its administration ; and it was easy

to see the acute pain she felt at the deprivation, by the abundance of tears she could not restrain.

“ She placed her enemies in the same rank with her friends, praying every day in private, for the one as well as the other. Unless seriously ill, she never failed rising at two in the morning. The Psalms were familiar to her. She was most abstemious in all her habits; fasting and abstaining even beyond her strength. Patient under severe sufferings, and the most contumelious ill-treatment, her only complaint was, that she experienced more indulgence than she deserved; and whether her meals were served hot or cold, early or late, she always manifested the same evenness of temper. She always dispensed with the assistance of others as much as possible, performing every service for herself of which she was capable, continually sweeping her own room, or making her bed, before the sister who was appointed to wait upon her, was up; and not only helping her, but by her pious conversation, good advice, and a thousand nameless kindnesses, serving her in much more essential ways, so that when Madame de Valois quitted us, the poor girl was quite in despair, saying she had lost her all.

“ If Madame de Valois eminently inspired respect she was likewise eminent for the consideration with which she treated others. Her attention to our abbess was accompanied by an air of respectful de-

ference, which never for an instant forsook her. She never excused herself the very least omission in regard to her; and if she had, in anything (though unwittingly) given her a moment's pain, she instantly threw herself on her knees, and most humbly implored her forgiveness without examining, on these occasions, on whose side the error was; so constant was her patience, even during the time in which she was persecuted almost beyond human endurance. Indeed, she habitually acted in the same manner to others, for she had such a sincere love of peace, that she never thought anything but sin, too great a price to pay for it.

“ Her charity embraced every person alike, so that each individual appeared to possess the same place in her kindness and affection. It might be said with the greatest truth, that next to close communion with GOD, her greatest delight was to make others happy. Naturally attentive and polite, her manners were super-eminently distinguished for an affectionate sympathy, a perfect and finished propriety, yet without affectation, and in the spirit of the gospel; so that what was originally bestowed on her by sweetness of temper, high birth, and exquisitely cultivated taste, grace had softened down, blended, and grafted upon the root of Christian love, meekness, and humility. She was, indeed, most tender, sympathising, and prudent; a perfect model of Christian friendship. She



loved retirement in her room, and never was seen passing or repassing, but to visit or console the sick. This, indeed, occurred very often, as she was always sent for by all who were in distress. She possessed a peculiar talent for entering, not only into the griefs, but into the most minute shades of the feelings of others. Everybody who visited her cell (and that was everybody in affliction) was quite sure of being well received; and it was observed, that no one, even amongst those who entered it with the most dejected countenances, ever quitted her without being more disposed both to find consolation, and to perform her duty more firmly. All, in Madame de Valois—her placid benevolence, and tenderness of sympathy, at once reassuring yet touching the heart.

“ She had eminently an upright and well-balanced mind, a sympathising heart, and an acute discernment and discrimination. Yet, that very penetration appeared to afford her a new means of exercising Christian charity; for, whilst it prevented her from being duped by the wicked, it always rendered her sympathy peculiarly alive to their besetting temptations. Her devotion, solid as it was, had no austerity; so that even the children loved to approach her, and often asked, as a reward, to be allowed to visit her. She had always some little good word to give them; but with sweetness and reverence, and not too long. Even to them, she laid herself out to be kind; for, when-

ever she had any little delicacy sent her, which often happened, as she was universally respected and beloved, she would only just taste it, out of civility, though a great invalid, and then set it apart to keep it for them.

“It was only on festival days that the bishop allowed her to join the community at recreation, where she was always asked for, and her society sought. Her conversation, indeed, was the delight of the whole community, as her example was its edification. Though she was so much looked up to, on account of her rare acquirements and eminent piety, her society was so far from imposing any constraint, that if she was a few moments later than usual, the most earnest inquiries were sure to be made after her; and if, from indisposition, or for the purpose of devotion, she spent the time in her room, the disappointment was visible on every countenance.

“A person of so kind a heart as Madame de Valois could not forget her own relations; accordingly, she considered them as ranking in the first place, amongst those neighbours whom our Saviour has commanded us to love as ourselves. She kept up a constant correspondence with them, not with a view of seeking her own amusement, but to render them all the services of friendship, continually participating in their interests or pleasures, with the view of leading them to God, of supporting them under the sorrows of life,

and preventing them from wandering amidst its dissipating pleasures. All her letters, and she had numerous correspondents, were eminently distinguished by the Christian spirit which spread its unction over the rare talents of the writer. She was very reserved in mentioning her hardships and trials; indeed, all ill usage appeared at once to slide from off her mind, as the rain from a polished laurel leaf; while the least instance of kindness was never forgotten, but was often the subject of her letters; so that it has happened, that persons who had continually maltreated her, in the most scandalous manner, have had the shame of being thanked by her friends for their kindness, which, if it happened but in one instance, her grateful heart never failed to record. It was not from dissimulation or reserve, nor even, if one may so say, from a point of duty, that she forebore to speak of her afflictions; but it seemed as though her heart was so full of heavenly joy and peace, and so replete with love to others, that they did not in reality occupy her mind. Madame de Valois was very assiduous in working with her hands, being always occupied when in conversation, with her spinning, knitting, or other useful work; the fruits of which she distributed amongst others, without reserving anything for herself. On every occasion we all addressed ourselves to her, well knowing she was equally ready, affectionately to receive, and affectionately to serve us all.

“When she left us, we were all exceedingly distressed. Our only consolation was, the certainty that the blessing of GOD, and the peace of GOD would attend her everywhere: indeed it was this same consideration which reconciled the preceding monastery in which she had been placed, to her loss.”

After the death of Louis the Fourteenth, when the other nuns of Port Royal were recalled, persons interested themselves particularly in behalf of Madame de Valois, who was the only one still debarred from receiving the sacraments. GOD raised up for her a powerful and able protectress, in the dowager Princess of Condé. But as her friends wished to avoid hurting the feelings of the Cardinal de Noailles, by placing her in his diocese, she was not united to the other nuns of Port Royal in the monastery of Malnoue. The place chosen for her residence was the abbey of Etrées, a very respectable monastery in the diocese of Evreux, where she was to be received with honour as a guest, instead of being guarded as a prisoner.

In the mean time the Cardinal de Noailles, deeply penitent for the part he had taken in the destruction of Port Royal, resolved, as far as possible, to repair the evils his irresolution had occasioned. He had long observed in secret, the conduct of Madame de Valois. Convinced, by her unshaken firmness, united with meekness and patience, of her extraordinary piety, he began to honour her as a saint; and unasked, and

of his own accord, proposed to her an immediate participation in the sacrament. He issued an order, that, in passing from Mantes to Evreux, she should pay a visit of some considerable time at Paris, where she should have full liberty, as often as she pleased, to visit all her Port Royal sisters, and other Christian friends.

To do her the greater honour, it was fixed that she should receive the sacrament at the church of St. Genevieve. From motives of delicacy to the Cardinal, who had so long withheld her from participating in them, she fixed the time at four in the morning, with a view to privacy ; but such was the deep interest excited by her constancy and piety, that notwithstanding the earliness of the hour, and the severity of the season, the cathedral was thronged by an innumerable concourse of people, whom a deep sympathy with her wrongs had collected together. They stood in profound silence, uncovered, during the ceremony ; and scarcely was the service concluded, when the whole assembly, as with one accord, prostrated themselves, to give thanks with her, and for her. The tears which flowed from every eye sufficiently showed their sincerity. On this happy termination of all her sufferings, Madame de Valois was quite overpowered ; when however she was sufficiently composed to be able to speak, she said, that “ She had at length obtained the summit of all her desires ; in short,” said

she, “but one moment can exceed the joy of this, that in which I shall be dissolved, to be united for ever with that Saviour in whose body and blood I have now had the favour again to participate.”

This last blessedness for which she seemed so fully prepared was not, however, to be immediately granted. The virtue of this admirable nun, had passed through the trial of adversity and contumely, it was now to endure the yet more difficult trial of honour and sudden prosperity.

The Princess of Condé, her friend and protectress, was equally delighted with her new friend, and proud of having compassed the deliverance of so eminent a saint. She was also very anxious to profit by Madame de Valois’ stay in Paris, to edify herself and all her numerous friends by her conversation, which was as agreeable to her as a woman of literature, as it was edifying on account of her piety. Madame de Condé was likewise influenced by another motive : she was resolved to do public honour to the virtue of her friend, and to hold her forth as an object of public respect, in the very midst of her most determined and powerful enemies. Having obtained the Cardinal’s permission, she appropriated to her a suite of apartments in her own palace. She also took her for three weeks to the calvary of the Luxembourg, where she was compelled to receive the visits and congratulations of an immense number of persons distinguished alike for



rank, talent, and merit. Princes and princesses, cardinals, dukes, bishops; in short, persons of piety, talent, and nobility, then in Paris, vied with each other in waiting upon her, and showing her marked deference and honour. Amongst this multitude, she had the great happiness to see her dear friends, the two ladies at Chartres, who made a journey to Paris to see her once more.

All her visitors were edified by her modesty, her love of silence and seclusion, and her enlightened piety; but, above all, with her reserve, in answering the multitude of questions addressed to her concerning her persecutions. This she did with so adroit and spontaneous a generosity, that she seemed naturally, when questioned concerning her hardships, only to remember instances of kindness: and these she would contrive to select, out of years of unmitigated barbarity and ill-treatment. She seemed perfectly to exemplify the common proverb, that whilst the evil spirit furnishes the memories of evil men with a record of injuries, in order to torment them with baleful passions and gloomy anticipations, a guardian angel stores that of the just with images of good, which gild the future with hope, and refresh the heart for the present, by spontaneously suggesting happy and tranquillising recollections. This mode, however, in which she thus

heaped coals of fire on the heads of her enemies, was by no means peculiar to Madame de Valois; all the nuns of Port Royal spoke of their persecutors in the same terms of kindness.

Whilst at Paris, Madame de Valois made the most diligent inquiries respecting the unknown visitor who had so seasonably met her on the road from Chartres to Mantes; but she never could obtain the least information respecting her, nor hear from any one of a lady of rank in any degree answering her description.

Madame de Valois paid a visit to her Port Royal sisters at Malnoue, where she stayed a considerable time, to the very great joy and comfort of both parties. At the request of the princess of Condé, she likewise visited several other convents, which had heard of her piety and misfortunes, and were exceedingly anxious to see her.

To seek honour of men, however, was no part of Madame de Valois' mission. After staying a few weeks, therefore, at Paris, which was an indispensable mark of respect to her benevolent friend, the princess of Condé, she prepared to quit the palace, where she had been treated with the highest respect, and the most distinguished consideration, for her future habitation, the monastery of Etrées. The princess, though unable, from her own infirmi-

ties, to accompany her, would not suffer Madame de Valois to go alone; accordingly, a lady and her daughter, who were intimate friends of Madame de Condé, and who had formed sentiments of the deepest veneration and attachment to Madame de Valois, determined to accompany her the whole way, and to prepare the community at Etrées, to receive her with the respect to which she was so justly entitled.

Madame de Valois was indeed very thankful to be at length permitted to leave that polished capital, and those distinguished circles which, after an absence of thirty years, she had only re-visited in submission to the will of GOD. Having taken a most affectionate leave of her Port Royal sisters, and interchanging mutual promises of constant correspondence, she set out on her journey, rejoicing to return to her beloved retirement, and to have escaped from that crowded metropolis, where she had received some of the most extraordinary honours that were ever paid to a religious and a female, with as much indifference, disengagement, and tranquillity of mind, as if she had been holding the recreation in the seclusion of a monastery.

The community of Etrées consisted, at this period, of thirty-five nuns. The eldest was thirty-five years old, and the youthful abbess only about eighteen. All the ladies in this convent were sprung from highly respectable families. They were

persons of superior education, and their conduct also was very decorous, so that the monastery was esteemed a very respectable one; but they were by no means distinguished for piety. They were indeed kind and well disposed, but they were totally ignorant of spiritual religion; and though they had refused the direction of the Jesuits, yet they were by no means pleased at the idea of having a Port Royal nun imposed upon them.

The ladies who accompanied Madame de Valois immediately perceived the secret reluctance of the nuns, notwithstanding the politeness with which they received her. They therefore requested to speak with the young abbess in private, and happily they not only dispelled all her apprehensions, by telling her of the amiable qualities of the nun they had brought, but succeeded in exciting the most powerful interest and sympathy in her mind, by drawing a lively picture of Madame de Valois' sufferings, and of her singular virtues and piety. So that when, at the end of two or three days, they took their leave, they left the whole community deeply impressed with respect, veneration, and pity for their distinguished guest, and congratulating themselves on the prize which divine providence had so graciously bestowed on their house.

Experience soon convinced them of the truth of the ladies' assertions. They all treated her with the

greatest respect, kindness, and attention; and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to contribute to her comfort; studying to anticipate all her wants by furnishing her with books, prizes, and every other amusement they could think of, and giving her full liberty to do whatever she would have wished had she been in her own community.

Nor was the kindness of the amiable nuns lost to themselves before God. Madame de Valois became to their house as the ark to that of Obed Edom. She proved a means of benediction to the whole community; and became the blessed instrument of diffusing the knowledge and the practice of vital godliness throughout the whole monastery. Her pious example, her edifying conversation, and the relations she gave them of the sisters she had known at Port Royal, made a lively and deep impression upon them; and by the grace of God the change which was effected was real, and thorough, and lasting. The monastery of Valois became an example of piety and regularity; and its instruction soon proved a source of blessing to the whole neighbourhood. The young abbess became truly converted to God; and feeling the heavy responsibility of her charge, and knowing that others possessed both the graces and the gifts requisite for it in a greater degree than herself, she, with unflinching humility, gave up the office and became a simple nun.

But the usefulness of Madame de Valois was by no means confined to the monastery of Etrées. She had the pleasure and satisfaction of proving equally a blessing both to her friends and to her enemies. The princess of Condé maintained a continual correspondence with her, which terminated in her complete conversion; and, amongst all the friends whom her eminent piety had gained, none was more zealous than the Cardinal de Noailles. He requested permission to correspond with her: and became her public and zealous protector. He sent her an edition of his works, including his beautiful pastoral instruction of 1719: nor did he fail, amongst other proofs of esteem, continually to recommend himself to her prayers.

In this monastery Madame de Valois continued till the time of her death, which took place on the 7th of November, 1722, on the day preceding that on which, forty years before, she had consecrated herself to GOD by the indissoluble vows of religion.

She continued an example of edification to the house of Etrées till her latest breath. She was, indeed, the consolation of the afflicted, and the strength of the feeble. The last three years of her life were spent in almost continual bodily sufferings. At length she was seized with her last illness, which continued for six weeks. During the twelve days and thirteen nights she was in the agonies of death,



she never once uttered a complaint. For a considerable part of the time she could not speak, but whenever it pleased the Lord to open her lips, her mouth showed forth His praise. She seemed, amidst the most excruciating pains, to forget present sufferings in the foretaste of eternal enjoyments. She showed the most perfect detachment from the things of earth, and all her thoughts were continually in heaven. She had repeatedly read to her the accounts of our Saviour's passion, which she seemed increasingly to realise. The whole monastery being collected round her bed in tears, and being cast down by the deepest sorrow, she alone retained her presence of mind, and consoled and supported them in a manner equally sympathising and vigorous. As for herself, her joy was uninterrupted; and her death was not merely peaceful, it was triumphant and glorious.

No epitaph by any human pen has reached our time, but her eulogium is written in the sanctity and exemplary piety of the community she left behind to mourn her loss, and her memory is held in eternal benediction. Whilst, in the long bright summer's eve, the villagers teach their infants to clasp their little hands, and lisp their prayers over the green sods that mark her grave, they little think that all the spiritual blessings which God has continued to bestow upon their highly favoured neigh-

bourhood were owing, in the first instance, to Port Royal, and especially to the fidelity with which the Mère Angélique, when a girl of seventeen, corresponded with the religious impressions which the grace of GOD then vouchsafed her.

Port Royal! thy foundations are uprooted, and the place that knew thee knoweth thee no more; but thy record is on high, and thy saintly children will be thy witnesses on earth, and in heaven, in time, and throughout eternity. Though long dead, they still continue to speak; and their voice is quickening, refreshing, inspiring; for it is none other than the utterance of a divinely inspired life. That an institution which exhibited so glorious an example of the union of piety and learning, which filled the eye, engaged the mind, and moved the heart of Christendom, scarcely a century and a half since, should be so little known in this land of evangelical light, is matter equally of wonder and regret;—while our youth are indebted for the rudiments of ancient literature to Lancelot and Arnould, and for the formation of their tastes to Pascal and Racine;—whilst our stores of learning are enriched by the labours of Tillemont;—while we are under such obligations to Saci for our popular theology, and our piety continues to be warmed and deepened by the writings of Nicole, Pascal, and Quesnel,—surely Port Royal ought to have a place in the English heart,

seeing that it has done so much to furnish and enrich the English mind. Be this as it may, most certain it is that the soul which is panting after holiness will find, in the writings and holy lives of the saints of Port Royal, a rich treasury of Gospel truth and most bright examples of genuine Christian piety.

The following beautiful description of Port Royal is translated from a work of the Rev. M. Petitpied, entitled — “*Obedientiæ credulæ vana Religio*,” *vide* 2 vol. cap. 9, p. 21. It was written at the close of 1710, a very short time after the imprisonment of the nuns, and before the demolition of the monastery in the year 1711.

“Never was there a religious house where regular discipline was better maintained; never was a monastery more imbued with holiness, more entirely separated from the corruptions of the world, more devoted to the Church, more obedient to its own rule, more submissive to pastoral authority!

“The vow of religious poverty was observed in its fullest extent. The nuns had nothing of their own, all was the property of the house; and even in the use of things possessed in common, what admirable simplicity, what moderation, what an entire absence of vanity and ostentation!

“Whilst it was permitted them to receive novices, never was a rich portion considered as an exchange for the vow of poverty: the house was closed to favour

and worldly interest, but always open to tried virtue and to a recognised vocation. Full of respect for their superiors, this respect produced only friendship and confidence. They lived together in the most perfect union; visitors were rare, conversation guarded, and always in the presence of a third person. How much to be admired was the profound silence, the grave modesty, the uniformity in religious exercises, the continued prayer with its fruit of sweet and refreshing tears; the deep and holy readings in which vain curiosity had no share; the abundant alms! Their lives were austere and frugal; short their repose, long and frequent their vigils, their fasts prolonged till eventide; pure was their faith, animated their hope, burning their love!

“The interior of the house was a school of virtue and piety for the young; and without its walls was an assemblage of the laity devoted to the arduous work of self-discipline.—Alas! who can count the number of saints, known only to God, whose ashes lie hidden beneath this dust until the time of manifestation!

“And what might we not say of the public services of the Church! What congregations night and day! What earnestness! what perseverance! With what violence (to use the words of Tertullian) did their fervent and living prayers ascend to God! Ceremonies were performed without pomp, but with dignity and edifying simplicity. In the chant of the choir,

angel voices seemed to mingle : the notes were sweet, distinct, harmonious, melting the listener into tears while they filled his heart with joy and consolation.

“ The sublime majesty of God was realised in this holy ground. The sacred mysteries were celebrated with awe and living faith. The ardent love of these pious souls for their adorable Lord made them constantly desire to receive Him in the Blessed Eucharist, with a fervid zeal, tempered and chastened with deep humility.

“ O holy valley ! O sacred habitation ! O ashes of departed saints ! The monastery of Port Royal may indeed be destroyed, but posterity will recognise as a truth what neither the course of ages, nor the iniquity of mankind can cause to be forgotten, — that this sainted house has perished ; not for crimes committed within its walls ; not for the ambition of the nuns, nor for disunion among them ; not because of costly expenditure, nor sumptuous buildings rashly undertaken : no ! but for a religious principle, for an undeviating attachment to Christian sincerity ; — and if every page of the history of Port Royal were to be obliterated, the memorable ruins would speak, and utter a never-dying testimony ! ” \*

\* “ Il n’y a point eu de monastère où la discipline régulière se soit mieux soutenue. Jamais on n’a eu une maison plus sainte, plus éloignée de la corruption du monde, plus attentive aux loix de l’Église, plus soumise aux pasteurs, plus attachée à toutes les règles.

“ Le vœu de la pauvreté religieuse s’y observoit dans toute son

Such was Port Royal ; the retreat of the learned and the devout, the nursery of saints, who counted

étendue. Les sœurs ne possédoient rien en propre ; tout était en commun parmi elles ; et encore dans l'usage de ces biens qu'elles possédoient en commun, quelle admirable simplicité, quelle modération, quel éloignement du faste et de la vanité ! Tant qu'il leur a été permis de recevoir des filles à la profession de la vie religieuse, jamais une riche dot n'a été le prix du vœu de la pauvreté, et leur maison, toujours fermée à la faveur, à la recommandation, aux intérêts humains, ne s'ouvroit qu'à la vertu éprouvée et à la vocation clairement reconnue. On les voyoit pleines de respect pour les mères, mais de ce respect qui produit l'amitié et la confiance. Elles vivoient ensemble dans la plus parfaite union. Les entretiens avec les personnes du dehors étoient rares, sans familiarité, et toujours sous les yeux d'une assistante.

“ On admiroit ce profond silence qui régnoit dans la maison, cette modestie sérieuse, cette uniformité dans les exercices, cette application continuelle à la prière, ces larmes si douces et si consolantes, qui en étoient le fruit, ces lectures également pieuses et solides, éloignées de toutes vaines curiosités, ces aumônes versées avec abondance dans le sein des pauvres. La vie y étoit austère et frugale, le sommeil court, les veilles longues et fréquentes, les jeûnes soutenus jusqu'au soir, la foi pure, l'espérance animée, la charité brûlante. L'intérieur de la maison étoit pour les jeunes filles une école de vertu et de piété ; l'extérieur étoit rempli de laïques vertueux, qui s'exerçoient courageusement dans les plus rudes travaux de la pénitence. Hélas ! qui peut dire combien il s'y est formé de saints qui ne sont connus que de DIEU seul, et dont les cendres sont cachées dans ces lieux jusqu'au tems de la manifestation !

“ Que dirai-je de l'office public de l'Église ! Quel concours nuit et jour ! Quelle assiduité ! Quelle persévérance ! Quelle violence, pour me servir de l'expression de Tertullien, ne faisoit-on point à DIEU, par l'union de ces prières si ferventes et si animées ! Les cérémonies s'y faisoient avec dignité, mais sans pompe, et avec une simplicité édifiante. Le chant ravissoit : vous auriez cru entendre des anges. C'étoit des voix douces, distinctes, articulées, harmonieuses, touchantes, qui attendoient jusqu'à faire répandre des



not their lives dear, so that they might finish their course with joy. The foundation of their faith was scripture, the object of their trust was Christ, the great atoning sacrifice for sin ; and their mode of apprehending Him was by a spiritual and divine teaching, the work of GOD upon the heart which waits upon Him in spirit and in truth. Taught of God, they believed with the heart unto righteousness ; and out of the abundance of a renewed heart, their

larmes, et qui remplissoient en même tems le cœur de joie et de consolation.

“ L’auguste majesté de DIEU se faisoit sentir dans ces saints lieux. Les saints mystères y étoient offerts avec une terreur sainte, religieuse, et pleine de foi. L’ardent amour que ces pieuses filles avoient pour Jésus-Christ, leur faisoit désirer sans cesse de recevoir souvent la divine Eucharistie, avec un empressement et un feu dont l’activité pourtant étoit quelquefois retenu par un vif sentiment d’humilité et pénitence.

“ O sainte vallée ! O sacrée demeure ! O cendres des saints qui reposent dans ces lieux ! Le monastère de Port Royal peut bien être renversé, mais la postérité saura ce que ni la suite des siècles, ni l’iniquité des hommes, ne feront jamais oublier, que cette maison si sainte a péri enfin — non pas par aucun crime qui s’y soit commis, non par l’ambition de religieuses, non par aucun différend survenu entre elles, non par des folles et excessives dépenses, non par des édifices somptueux témérairement entrepris, non par le relâchement discipline, qui depuis cent ans qu’elle a été établie dans ce monastère, s’y est toujours également soutenue — mais, ce qui est incroyable, par un scrupule religieux, et par un attachement inviolable à la sincérité chrétienne. Chose inouïe jusqu’à nos jours ! Et quand même de ce lieu, si digne de vénération, élèveront, pour ainsi dire, leur voix, et serviront de témoignage éternel ! ”

mouths uttered the praises of God, and their lives exhibited the genuine fruits of faith. Such was the source of the holiness of their lives, the unshaken constancy of their perseverance, and the triumphant blessedness of their end. Whatever differences may distinguish various bodies of Christians, both history and experience attest the fact, that wherever these polar truths have been faithfully and spiritually received, whether by the Catholic, the Lutheran, or the Calvinist, the same strength of faith, the same good fruits, the same blessed and triumphant deaths have been so many evidences of the truth of our most holy religion, and so many manifestations of its power and glory, testifying to them who seek to know the truth, as well as to those who oppose themselves, that this is eternal life, “to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” But let it be remembered, that no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” And is it not written, and has not Christ said, “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” And is it not also written, and has He not also said, “*Everyone that*

asketh, receiveth ; and *he that seeketh*, findeth ; and *to him that knocketh*, it shall be opened " ? It was the apprehension of these truths which laid the foundation for Port Royal's future celebrity ; and whenever and by whomsoever they are apprehended and acted upon, there will always be a measure of the selfsame spirit, and less or more of the selfsame fruits.

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THERE are few books more interesting in the English language than the memoirs of Port Royal and its Saints. In a sensual and sinful age what wonders of reformation were wrought by the Sisters Arnould! It is difficult to decide what is the debt the world owes to the Port Royalists. Some of the finest verses of Racine were meditated whilst a boy at school within the walls of Port Royal: the controversial and theological works of Arnould, the Thoughts and Letters of Pascal, the grammars which at one time had a universal reputation, had a similar origin. The aged Tillemont, in his last will, requesting interment at Port Royal, says, *For the education I there received I bless God with all my heart, and through His mercy I hope to bless Him for it throughout eternity.* When evil days came,—when the sunshine of prosperity had vanished as speedily as it dawned,—when the Court, the Jesuits, and the clergy persecuted the little band with a rancour rarely met with, save when the truthful and conscientious are called to win the martyr's crown,—when the Mère Angélique, exhausted by a persecution of five-and-twenty years, was on her death-bed, is not the aspect of the Port Royalists almost sublime? Yet in England how little was known of them till Mrs. SchimmelPennineck did justice to their memories! Had she been cast among them she herself would have occupied no mean place in that illustrious group.

DAILY NEWS, Nov. 2, 1858.

CAN there be a human life which does not afford some instructive lessons to those who are made acquainted with its upward strivings, its manifold perplexities, defeats, and victories? If not, how are we to decide which ought to be published and which not? Or what kind of teaching must a life convey in order to merit publication? These are questions which though difficult are ever being practically answered,—not by propounding canons that shall be infallible guides to executors and friends; but by fearlessly piling biography upon biography, and autobiography on these again, until it reminds one of the noted attempt to place Ossa upon Pelion. The only law which seems to be recognised at present is—ability, or otherwise, on the part of those who may possess, or have access to, materials for such works. If the very idea of a censor of the press were not alien to the instincts of the Anglo-Saxon mind, we should feel inclined to propose the appointment of such an officer—were it only in mercy to those who have *ex officio* to wade through such masses of unreadable matter. It is, therefore, with no small pleasure that we find the life of Mrs. SchimmelPennineck—poetic name!—to be worthy of meritorious mention. It is valuable both as showing how insufficient the highest moral education is to satisfy the deep-longing needs of the soul, and for the impressions which she has recorded that such men as Doctors Darwin and Priestley, and other celebrities of that period, made upon her at a time when her mind was without any guiding star or fixed place of rest. . . . We can sincerely recommend these volumes to our readers.

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### Select Critical Opinions—continued.

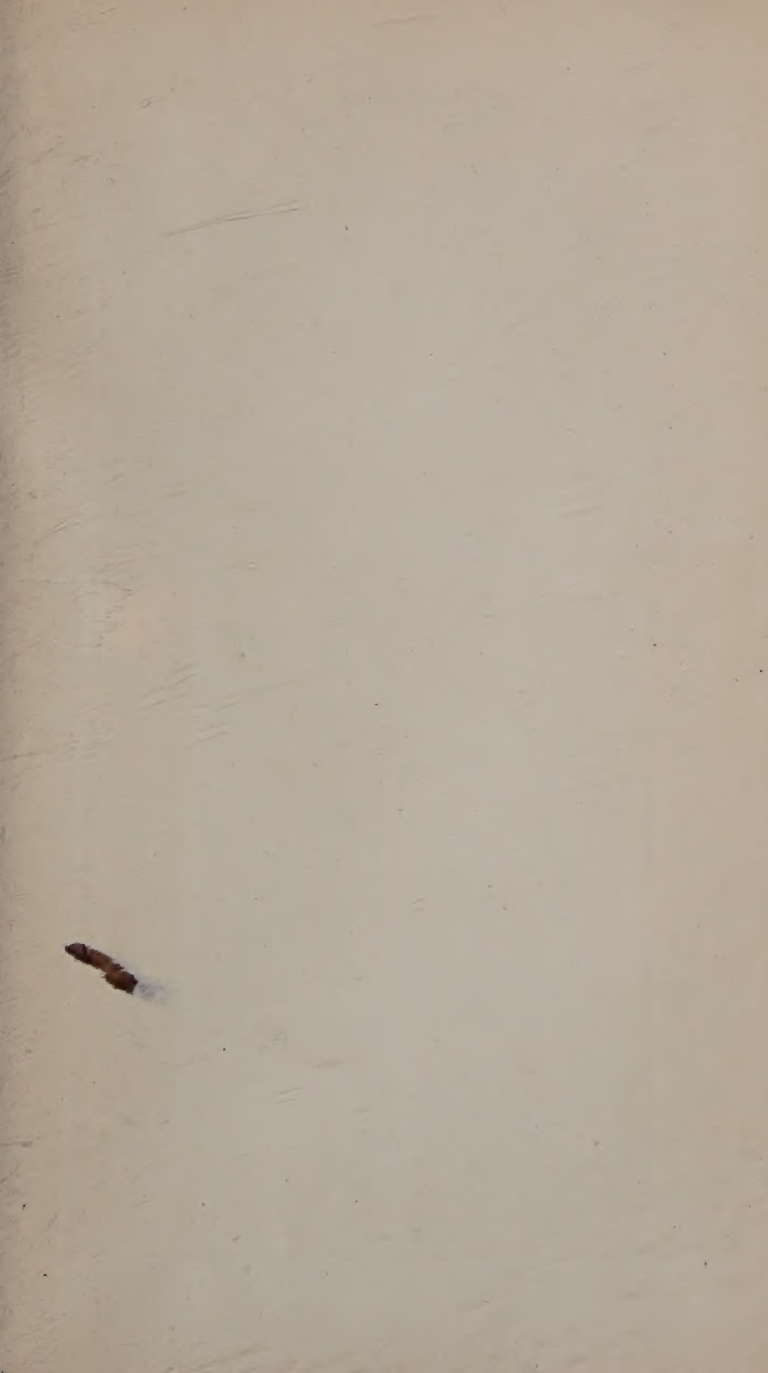
SOME of our readers may be familiar with Mrs. SchimmelPenninck's *Select Memoirs of Port Royal*. But it is not to any literary celebrity that this biography owes its charm. The interest attaching to Mrs. SchimmelPenninck's writings is hardly sufficient of itself to warrant the publication of her life. Nor is it commended to us by any striking vicissitudes or remarkable incidents. Her life was quiet, domestic, uneventful. Nevertheless, these two volumes were very well worth publishing: few readers will peruse them without pleasure, or lay them down without a sense of benefit derived from them. The history which they record is not a history of external events, for these were few and unimportant, but the history of a mind, and that a mind of no common order. Mrs. SchimmelPenninck was a person of considerable natural ability: her genius was highly and variously cultivated; her taste was good, her religious feeling strong, genial, and widely diffused. She had, besides, from earliest childhood, an acquaintance with many persons of literary and scientific distinction. Her religious experience also was something remarkable, for she was born a Quaker, consorted intimately with Roman Catholics, was baptised into a Wesleyan, and died a member of a Moravian congregation. It is evident that such a person can tell us a great deal worth listening to about herself; and if we add that the first of these two volumes is an autobiography, and the second largely composed of her letters and conversation, the reader will have the secret of the interest we have felt in reading them. The interest of this biography is not however confined to the story of Mrs. SchimmelPenninck's own life. Some of the best passages in it are the vivid sketches she draws of the remarkable men whom she had seen at her father's house.

GUARDIAN.

THIS book is essentially the record of an inner, not an outward life. Born of wealthy parents, nurtured amid circumstances of affluence, receiving every advantage of education that money could secure and intellectual care provide, married into a highly-connected Dutch family, and living in the full possession of her faculties to a good old age, there was little of outward vicissitude to interrupt the even tenour of Mrs. SchimmelPenninck's outward life. All the interest of her autobiography and memoirs, and it is not a little, is derived from the picture they give of the struggles of a heart led under circumstances of singular difficulty to a knowledge of God's truth; the illustration supplied of the infinite goodness of God, and the sole sufficiency of Divine grace; and, above all, the earnest warning afforded by every part of Mrs. SchimmelPenninck's life against indifference to distinctive truth, and the worship of mere unsanctified intellect. All the mental contests and distresses through which she passed; the indefiniteness and indistinctness of doctrinal view which formed a considerable element in her own character; the religious difficulties on which, in her latter days, she nearly made shipwreck of her faith,—are to be attributed to this cause, and exhibit a like foolishness of human wisdom, and the inadequacy of human strength. On the other hand, the light to which she really attained, the line of conduct she was enabled to adopt, and the triumphant peace which marked the closing scenes of her life, testify to the sovereignty of the Divine will in calling His people when He will, and how He will. The evils of her life were all human; the blessings of it all Divine. None have acknowledged this with more heartiness and loving gratitude to God than Mrs. SchimmelPenninck herself. Viewed in this point of view, and with a careful discrimination of the scriptural from the unscriptural, many most valuable lessons may be learned from these volumes. Having by God's special mercy escaped the shipwreck of her faith, the aged lady appears to have ripened gradually for heaven, and to have fallen asleep in Jesus in full hope of a glorious resurrection, and with an intense love for Christ. . . . We repeat that there are two great lessons written in prominent characters upon the whole of the narrative contained in these volumes. The utter insufficiency of the human intellect, and the urgent danger of mere intellectualism, is the one; and the other is the sovereignty and sufficiency of Divine grace, to enlighten under any circumstances, and prevail against any obstacles.

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